



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

03-12-2024

Sunshine Raisin / National Raisin to Pay \$2 Million in EEOC Sexual Harassment Lawsuit

Dried Fruit Supplier Settles Federal Charges It Harassed and Retaliated Against Female Farmworkers

FRESNO, Calif. – Sunshine Raisin Corp., doing business as National Raisin, will pay \$2 million and furnish extensive injunctive relief to settle a U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) sexual harassment and retaliation lawsuit, the federal agency announced today. The EEOC brought the lawsuit on behalf of a class of female agricultural workers, many of whom only speak Spanish.

The EEOC lawsuit charged that National Raisin subjected female workers to a sexually hostile work environment at its Fowler, California production facility. The harassment was widespread and was perpetrated by both managers and employees against female workers while they sorted and packed dried fruit. The harassment included frequent unwanted groping; sexually explicit comments; requests for sexual favors; and threats of retaliation for not acquiescing to the harassment. The lawsuit also charged that National Raisin failed to take appropriate corrective measures after receiving complaints about the harassment and instead retaliated against those who reported it.

The EEOC’s related suit against employment staffing agency Select Staffing is ongoing.

Such alleged conduct violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, and retaliation for complaining about discrimination. The EEOC filed suit (EEOC v. Sunshine Raisin Corporation, d/b/a National Raisin and Real Time Staffing Services, LLC, d/b/a Select Staffing, Case No. 1:21-cv-01424-JLT-HBK) in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its administrative conciliation process.

“Protecting vulnerable workers from harassment, retaliation and other forms of discrimination is a key enforcement priority for the Commission as set forth in the EEOC’s most recent **strategic enforcement plan (https://**

gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.eeoc.gov%2Fstrategic-enforcement-plan-fiscal-years-2024-2028&data=05%7C02%7CJAMES.RYAN%40EEOC.GOV%7Cd43fd7610e514711baf708dc326cfd6%7C3ba5b9434e564a2f9b91b1f1c37d645b%7C0%7C0%7C638440690934722464%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Iik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=I0IShxvws0JTh3IbhplXCdVNib9LwsngTlIYoaiF6Vw%3D&reserved=0).”

said EEOC Chair Charlotte A. Burrows. “Farmworker women, especially those with limited English proficiency, fall squarely within the category of vulnerable workers. The EEOC will continue to bring litigation where necessary to ensure that they – and all workers – have equal employment opportunity free from workplace harassment.”

The consent decree settling the suit, entered by U.S. District Judge Jennifer L. Thurston on March 11, 2024, in addition to the monetary relief of \$2 million, prohibits future discrimination and retaliation and includes extensive injunctive relief remedies that require National Raisin to change its employment practices to prevent future sexual harassment in its workplace. This includes hiring a third-party monitor, significant training and robust reporting mechanisms to ensure that employees feel safe and able to report misconduct, and updating the company’s anti-discrimination policies to prohibit harassment of employees and temporary workers. National Raisin must also provide periodic reports to the EEOC with information regarding any complaints about sexual harassment.

A claims process will be set up to compensate women who were sexually harassed

and/or retaliated against. If you are interested in making a claim, please contact the EEOC:

Tel: (213)-785-3093

Email: National-SelectPCM@eeoc.gov

Anna Park, regional attorney for the EEOC's Los Angeles District Office, which includes Fresno in its jurisdiction, said, "We commend the brave women who came forward to report the harassment and retaliation. Sexual harassment remains a persistent problem in the agriculture industry and employers need to take their responsibilities seriously to ensure a workplace free of discrimination. Employers cannot delegate their non-discrimination responsibilities to staffing agencies, nor can they hide behind a staffing agency to avoid their obligations under federal law."

Armando Hernandez, local director for the EEOC's Fresno office, added, "The EEOC understands the detriment that retaliation has on the workforce and has continued to make addressing retaliation a priority through its 2024-2028 Strategic Enforcement Plan. It is unacceptable for employers to retaliate against individuals who report discrimination and harassment in the workplace."

For more information on sexual harassment discrimination, visit: <https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment>). For additional information on retaliation, visit <https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation>).

This lawsuit was initiated by the EEOC's Fresno Local Office, one of five component offices of the agency's Los Angeles District Office. The Los Angeles District Office has jurisdiction over parts of California and Nevada; the Hawaiian Islands; American Samoa; Guam; the Northern Mariana Islands; and Wake Island.

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at www.eeoc.gov (<http://www.eeoc.gov>). Stay connected with the latest EEOC news by subscribing to our [email updates](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new) (<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new>).

Recent Press Releases from the Fresno Local Office

[**EEOC Sues Elaine's Pet Resorts and Elaine's Animal House for Disability**](#)

[Discrimination \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-elaines-pet-resorts-and-elaines-animal-house-disability-discrimination\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-elaines-pet-resorts-and-elaines-animal-house-disability-discrimination)

[California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Settles EEOC Charge \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/california-department-corrections-and-rehabilitation-settles-eeoc-charge-0\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/california-department-corrections-and-rehabilitation-settles-eeoc-charge-0)

[California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Settles EEOC Charge \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/california-department-corrections-and-rehabilitation-settles-eeoc-charge\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/california-department-corrections-and-rehabilitation-settles-eeoc-charge)

Recent Press Releases on the Subject of Sexual Harassment

[Seattle Children's Hospital to Pay \\$125,000 to Settle EEOC Sexual Harassment Charge \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/seattle-childrens-hospital-pay-125000-settle-eeoc-sexual-harassment-charge\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/seattle-childrens-hospital-pay-125000-settle-eeoc-sexual-harassment-charge)

[Paramount Healthcare Consultants to Pay \\$50,000 in EEOC Sex Discrimination and Retaliation Lawsuit \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/paramount-healthcare-consultants-pay-50000-eeoc-sex-discrimination-and-retaliation-lawsuit\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/paramount-healthcare-consultants-pay-50000-eeoc-sex-discrimination-and-retaliation-lawsuit)

[Paramount Healthcare Consultants Pagará 50.000 Dólares en una Demanda de la EEOC por Discriminación y Represalias Sexuales \(https://www.eeoc.gov/es/newsroom/paramount-healthcare-consultants-pagara-50000-dolares-en-una-demanda-de-la-eeoc-por\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/es/newsroom/paramount-healthcare-consultants-pagara-50000-dolares-en-una-demanda-de-la-eeoc-por)