

## News Release

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### **Judge orders payment of \$347,000 in back wages and penalties, 3-year debarment of Global Horizons from H-2A agricultural program**

*Case involves Thai workers employed in Hawaii, is second involving Los Angeles company*

**SAN FRANCISCO** — The U.S. Department of Labor has obtained a judgment requiring Los Angeles-based Global Horizons Inc. and president Mordechai Orian to pay \$153,000 in back wages to 88 temporary agricultural workers from Thailand employed in Hawaii, plus \$194,000 in civil money penalties, for committing significant violations of the federal H-2A temporary nonimmigrant agricultural laborer program. Administrative Law Judge William Dorsey found Global Horizons and Orian jointly and severally liable for 11 categories of violations, warranting back wage payments, penalty assessments and a mandatory three-year debarment from participation in the H-2A program.

"It's appropriate that Global Horizons and its owner are barred from employing H-2A workers for the next three years," said Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis. "These workers left their families and homes with the expectation that they would be treated fairly and paid properly. Instead, Global Horizons violated multiple rules under the H-2A program designed to protect both domestic and foreign workers, and provide a level playing field for all agricultural employers."

Investigations conducted by local offices of the department's Wage and Hour Division's Western Region found that the defendants failed to pay employees for all hours worked and to pay the correct hourly wage rate; impermissibly withheld federal income tax and made illegal deductions from workers' wages for meals and other basic living expenses; charged workers for housing-related expenses such as water, electricity and sewage; failed to pay workers for their transportation and subsistence costs; retaliated against workers who rightfully complained about their pay; failed to maintain required payroll records and produce them upon the division's request; and illegally solicited agreements from workers to waive their rights and decrease their wages.

Dorsey determined that Global Horizons and Orian engaged in a pattern of activity that caused significant injury to the H-2A workers concerning their wages, benefits and working conditions, and ordered the three-year debarment.

The debarment ordered by Dorsey follows a Dec. 21, 2010, ruling by the Labor Department's Administrative Review Board affirming a \$199,600 judgment against both Global Horizons and Orian in a California H-2A case. The board found that Global Horizons and Orian gave preferential treatment to H-2A workers over U.S. workers and committed many of the same violations as in the Hawaii case. The department's San Francisco Regional Solicitor's Office litigated both of these cases.

For more information about enforcement under the H-2A temporary worker program, call the Wage and Hour Division's toll-free helpline at 866-4US-WAGE (487-9243). Information is also available on the Internet at <http://www.dol.gov/whd>.

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