BEFORE THE OFFICE OF TAX APPEALS STATE OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE MATTER OF THE	APPEAL OF:)		
)		
KEN'S FOODS, INC.,)	OTA NO.	20076391
)		
	APPELLANT.)		
)		
)		

CERTIFIED COPY

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Sacramento, California

Tuesday, August 20, 2024

Reported by:

Aaron Ellington CSR# 13449

Job No.: 50130 OTA(PM)

1	APPEARANCES:		
2	Panel Lead:	ALJ ASAF KLETTER	
<i>3</i>	Pallel Lead.	ALU ASAF KLETTER	
5	Panel Members:	ALJ JOHN JOHNSON ALJ TOMMY LEUNG	
6			
7	For the Appellant:	DELOITTE TAX LLP KATHY FREEMAN	
8		BENJAMIN ELLIOTT JESSICA BAKER	
9			
10 11	For the Respondent:	FRANCHISE TAX BOARD RYAN IVANUSICH KATIE FRANK	
12		DELINDA TAMAGNI	
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Sacramento, California; Tuesday, August 20, 2024 1:04 p.m.

2.

JUDGE KLETTER: Let's go ahead and go on the record. This is the appeal of Ken's Foods, OTA Case Number 20076391. Today is Tuesday, August 20th, 2024, time is 104 p.m. my name is Asaf Kletter. With me are Administrative Law Judges, Judge John Johnson, and Tommy Leung. While I'm the administrative law judge conducting this hearing, all three judges are coequal decision makers.

Also present is our stenographer Aaron Ellington who is reporting this hearing verbatim. To ensure we have an accurate record, we ask that everyone speak one at a time and do not speak over each other. Please speak clearly and loudly, and when needed Mr. Ellington will stop the hearing process and ask for clarification, for you to slow down. After the hearing Mr. Ellington will produce the official hearing transcript, which will be available on the Office of Tax Appeals website. The hearing transcript and video recording are public record.

Now I'd like for the parties to please go in turn and each identify yourself by stating your name for the record, beginning with appellant.

MS. FREEMAN: I'm Kathy Freeman with Deloitte on behalf of the Appellant.

MR. ELLIOTT: Benjamin Elliott with Deloitte on

1	behalf of the Appellant.
2	MS. BACKER: Jessica Backer with Deloitte on behalf
3	of Appellant.
4	MS. JOHNSON: Marie Johnson, Ken's Foods.
5	JUDGE KLETTER: Thank you. And for Franchise Tax
6	Board?
7	MR. IVANUSICH: Ryan Ivanusich for FTB.
8	MS. FRANK: Katie Frank for FTB.
9	MS. TAMAGNI: Delinda Tamagni, FTB.
10	JUDGE KLETTER: Thank you so much, and the issue for
11	today is whether Appellant has established error in FTB's
12	determination that Appellant's California activities exceeded
13	the scope of Public Law 86-272 protection. With respect to
14	the evidentiary record, Franchise Tax Board has provided
15	Exhibits A through AD. Appellant did not object to the
16	admissibility of these exhibits, and therefore these exhibits
17	are admitted into the record.
18	(Respondent's Exhibits A through AD
19	were marked for identification.)
20	(Respondent's Exhibits A through AD
21	were admitted.)
22	Appellant has provided Exhibits 1 through 23. FTB did
23	not object to the admissibility of these exhibits, therefore
24	these exhibits are entered into the record.
25	(Appellant's Exhibits 1 through 23

were marked for identification.)
(Appellant's Exhibits 1 through 23
were admitted.)

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And as a reminder for today, we have 90 minutes for Appellant's presentation, inclusive of testimony, and you can organize it as you wish. Just let us know when you would like to begin the testimony so that I can swear in the witness, and for Franchise Tax Board, they will also have 15 minutes, and when you -- at any point when you would like, or if you would like to question the witness, we'll just -- just let me know so that we can prepare that, and I did want to ask Appellant, and specifically Ms. Johnson, do you have any time limitations today, or are you available for the entire session?

MS. JOHNSON: No. We're available.

JUDGE KLETTER: Okay. Thank you. And, you know, to the extent possible, it would be good to question Ms. Johnson further on, so she can answer before her presentation just for time's sake, and then finally, we'll have 15 minutes for Appellant to provide a closing statement and any rebuttal, so with that, Ms. Freeman, are you ready for the presentation?

MS. FREEMAN: Yes, I am, but we'd like to swear in the witness now, because we anticipate her providing clarification throughout our presentation and being available to answer any questions as we go if necessary, so I think now would be a good time.

JUDGE KLETTER: Okay. So I'll go ahead and swear in the witness. Ms. Johnson, can you please raise your right hand, and I will swear you in? That will allow the Office of Tax Appeals to accept your statements as evidence.

Do you solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

MS. JOHNSON: I do.

THE COURT: Thank you. Ms. Freeman, you can begin when you're ready.

PRESENTATION

MS. FREEMAN: Good afternoon. We appreciate your time today to facilitate the resolution of this appeal. The factors at issue are tax years 5-1-2011 through 4-30-2012, so the tax years are ending 4-30-2012 and 4-30-2013 are the tax years at issue.

Marie Johnson here on behalf of the Appellant, and she has been the VP of Finance and Treasure and worked for Ken's Foods for over 25 years. The issue in this appeal is whether Appellant has immunity from the California franchise tax based on Public Law 86-272 for these tax years, and the California franchise tax is a tax based on income, hence public law would apply if they're immune from Public Law 86-272.

Respondent has performed a detailed audit of Appellant's books and records, conducted multiple employee interviews, issued follow-up IDR information requests where it sought

further inquiry, and upon completion of the audit Respondent identified specific activities in California that it claims exceeded the protections of Public Law 86-272. All the other activities are assumed to have been approved within the scope.

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Taxpayer has replied to the audit determination letter attempting to clarify the record and the facts that were inaccurate or misconstrued to no avail. Taxpayer protested the audit determination, again attempted to clarify the record. Respondent proposed a firm -- to which Appellant attempted to further clarify the record, and again, we've attempted multiple times to clarify the facts and records in this case, and here now again are here to clarify the facts and records in this case.

Taxpayer has timely filed its franchise tax returns as an S corporation. FTB has not asserted any accuracy to the penalties, has not asserted any penalties for failure to furnish information, so we're going forward on the record as it sits today.

We believe Appellant's activities within California fall clearly within the purview of 86272. We believe these activities implicitly or explicitly facilitate solicitation of sales, or are ancillary to solicitation of sales or de minimis.

We would add, consistent with Respondent's assertions that whatever you determine today could actually impact the

tax calculations, so there could be some ancillary issues on how the tax calculations work, but we're not going to address those here. We just need to put on the record that Respondent has also made those assertions in their briefing.

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Appellant is a privately-held, family-owned food manufacturing company headquartered in Marlborough, Massachusetts, and additional manufacturing facilities in Georgia and Nevada. They sell TPP. Basically, they sell sauces, marinades, and dressings. It's a very simple portfolio.

Appellant is the number one food service dressing and sauce brand in the country, so they are well known. They've been around for a long time. Appellant does not have any facilities, including manufacturing, commercial kitchens or R&D facilities in California, no warehouses in California, doesn't own any real or TPP in this state, except for a nominal amount of lease audits used by the sales people. FTB has not disputed that fact.

Appellant did carry samples into the state, which is a protected activity, and these were used to prepare food tastings or hand out to prospective customers, and that is a protected activity.

Appellant only has a commercial kitchen in Marlborough,

Massachusetts, which is where all R&D is conducted. It is

important to know that in order -- in their business, in order

to do R&D they need a commercial kitchen, and the only location they have a commercial kitchen is in Marlborough, which is outside California.

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We would point out, as I've pointed out earlier, that it was clear that the Respondent did not fully understand Appellant's business operations, or the business of its brokers, which is why we've repeatedly attempted to clarify the activities, so that's why we're here now is to clarify the misconceptions, misstatements, and inaccuracies in the Appellant's position supporting their notices.

Again, Ken's Food is world renowned. It's been around. Originally there was one Ken's Steakhouse was formed in 1941, and it was in 1948 that they actually licensed their formulas and started Ken's Foods there in Marlborough, Massachusetts.

Included in their salad dressings was Sweet Baby Ray's, which was an acquisition back in 2005, and basically Sweet Baby Ray's is a significant part now of their product portfolio and sold throughout the U.S.

Appellant has two primary business lines. The first line is wholesale sales of TPP to retailers primarily using an electronic data interchange to place orders, and in rare instances Appellant's brokers would take the orders where there was perhaps a small business and they didn't have access to an EDI system.

Retail customers that they sold their products to

include, but are not limited to grocery stores, convenience stores, membership warehouse clubs, and other online retailers.

2.4

And Acosta was their primary broker throughout the U.S. during these years. The brokers were paid on a commission basis as a percentage of product sales, and applicable percentage can be varied based on the product, but basically their payments are made based on the volume sold. All sales orders that are placed by the customer directly or Acosta are sent to Marlborough, Massachusetts for approval, and then shipped to California from outside of California. All product pricing was established in Marlborough, Massachusetts.

The second line of business was sales of TPP to commercial food service establishments with the sales being placed by these establishments to a third party broker. The sales staff making the sales presentation, once they concluded and agreed to place a sale, would then direct them to place the order through the distributor, and such distributors would include US Foods, Sysco, that's, S-Y-S-C-O. Commercial food service customers include restaurant chains, independent restaurants, schools, hotels, etc., but basically it's where you were gonna prepare the food and then serve it to the customer.

So the distributor would receive orders from the food service establishment and then place an order themselves for

what the customer was looking for with Ken's Foods. Ken's Foods would then sell it to the distributor, and the distributor would resell the same product to the food service business, basically making a profit on the margin between what they paid for it and what they sold it to the food service establishment.

2.

All orders, again, are placed ultimately through
Marlborough, Appellant's offices outside the state and shipped
from outside the state, and all product pricing is established
by Appellant in Massachusetts.

When customers placed orders through brokers and distributors used in the sales solicitation process, these brokers are not exclusive to Appellant. Appellant has no exclusive brokers, dealers or otherwise, and the broker Acosta actually serviced pretty much everybody in the U.S. They are in every retail store, retail establishment, and they are not exclusive to Appellant.

Basically offering the products of all the food manufacturers to the retail store, so they're given them access to product, and then providing in-store services for the retail. You know, setting up shelving, moving shelving, stocking, un-stocking, and other activities in the store depending on what the retail store chose to pay for for Acosta, because they have a wide degree of available services that are available.

For the Appellant, all we did was pay them to sell our product on a commission basis based on volume. There were deductions potentially from those invoices for various returns etc., but basically we paid them on the net sales totals that they accomplished on behalf of Appellant.

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Appellant does not provide any training related to its products, and nor is such training necessary. We're talking about bottles of salad dressing. We don't need to explain to somebody how to open a bottle. There's instructions on the bottle. Everybody's opened a bottle.

With respect to the sauces provided to the food service businesses, we're dealing with culinary experts, chefs, professionally trained. They know how to make sauces. They know how to use sauces, there's no training required. All that really is an option is that the food services businesses have their own menus, they have their own products, and at best we show them, of a particular sauce offered by Ken's Food, basically the ability and the versatility of a sauce, and different ways they can use the same sauce if they want, but that -- that demonstration on the versatility of a particular product is just to make a sale on a specific customer. We don't have group meetings with customers. Every sale is customer specific at their location.

The final point in general that I'd like to make is that the Appellant's sales teams, whether they're retail or food

service, because again, one sells to the store, one sells to the businesses that are making, preparing food for the customers, is that they do make and take every available opportunity to meet with customers either as a team or individually, and every meeting with a customer is a opportunity to make a sale regardless of the circumstances.

So during these tax years there were, over that two-year period, there was a total of seven sales employees that were at issue. So you have the retail regional managers, retail, again, is the stores, that were involved in the whole west coast, west region. There was two individuals assigned to California, not exclusive, so they were servicing other states as well that were handling the entire State of California.

You gotta -- And when you look at retail establishments, you know, there's tens, if not hundreds of thousands of retail establishments in California, so two people, it was impossible for two people to handle meeting with every single retail customer in the state.

That's why the retail regional managers work with Acosta, an independent contractor, to have them go into the stores, make appointments, meet with the customers, and take sales. This included identifying new customers and existing customers to place orders, so Acosta was an independent contractor used by Appellant to extend the reach of the two individuals who are part-time in California to achieve retail sales.

The other three employees were called senior national account managers, and account managers dealt with food service, which is the restaurants and those preparing food. They were responsible for selling to the food service businesses.

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You also had one other member of -- There was a sales team that would go in to make these presentations on the food service, and included on that same sales team was a corporate chef. That corporate chef, which is one of your questions that I'll get to, one of them was there for part of 2012 tax year, and then he left, and then was subsequently replaced about five or six months later by a second chef. The chefs were not exclusive to California. Most of the food service employees were not exclusive to California and had, like, the whole west coast region, so they were not assigned specifically to California.

The second -- The first chef, David Mack, quit on October 29th, 2011, and was replaced by Gregory Schweizer who was based in Texas, and he lived in Texas and would visit California periodically to do sales presentations as part of -- as a member of the food service sales team.

Going back to the retailers, again, Appellant's products include the salad dressing sauce and marinade that you could find on the shelves in a grocery stores. Everybody's been down the condiment aisle. Everybody's seen salad dressing,

barbecue sauce, etc., marinades on the aisle. You have shelving that the product's displayed on.

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Usually our products are on either on the aisle where the condiments are or salad dressing or perhaps on an endcap if the product was being featured, and then if you look at Exhibits 19 and Exhibit 20 in -- Those were ours. What you'll see is an example of a retail shelf, but again everybody's been in a grocery store, seen a retail shelf, knows that you have multiple levels of shelving, and products are displayed on there.

What you need to understand for Exhibit 20 which is the planogram, and all the planogram is, is the shelving in the store and all at issue is how much shelving I get horizontally, how much shelving I get vertically, and what product are displayed at what level, because obviously there's preferred levels of product placement on the shelves.

For the retailers, the retailers do send out advertising mailers. I'm sure we've all gotten them. Appellant's products may be featured within these mailers, and Appellant reimburses the retail customer for specific advertising of their products through trade spend. That's the name for it, trade spend, T-R-A-D-E-S-P-E-N-D, so the purpose of trade spend is to reimburse basically the retail customer for putting the time and effort into advertising their products. That could also include advertising on the shelves.

Advertising is an invitation to make a sale and is a protected activity.

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And is what you'll see, is most of Appellant's advertising is targeted. They're targeting the sales in store. It's not really national marketing plans. They're going after specific retailers and their companies, or their customers to make sales. It is very targeted advertising.

The role of the two retail managers was to solicit sales from retail customer directly themselves, but again, they are very thinly stretched, they have the whole west region, and there's only two of them, and there are tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of stores to visit, or they would use their independent contractor, Acosta, to solicit sales on their behalf.

There's just too many stores for them to do it all themselves, so Acosta was an extension of the retail managers that allowed them to reach more customers and complete more solicitations of sales.

As part of the process of making a sale, we can't stress enough the relationships they have to have with the retail establishments. People don't let you make cold calls anymore, and you have to have a relationship. You have to maintain the relationship. They have to know that you are present, or they'll just use somebody else, so part of the role of the retail manager was to check in as part of implicit and

explicit solicitation with the various retail customers and see how they were -- how they were doing with the sales so they could place more orders.

Again, the retail managers work with Acosta to expand Appellant's sales solicitation efforts as it was impossible for the two retail managers to do it themselves.

Again, if you look at Exhibits 12 and 13, which are an example of Acosta, how we pay our retail commission, those show that we are in fact paying Acosta a commission based on sales, and I will defer to Marie briefly to explain, as she was the one actually paying the invoices for Acosta, how the invoicing worked.

MS. JOHNSON: Sure. So we would just generate a report for total sales and deduct any, maybe off-invoice deductions. We would do pricing returns, shorts, damages, and then just apply the commission percentage to it.

MS. FREEMAN: And the services that you pay Acosta for purely were for sales?

MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

MS. FREEMAN: We have pointed out repeatedly during our prior discussions with Respondent that Acosta was -Acosta was unique that they were also directly hired by the retailers to provide extensive in-store services, as outlined in Respondent's exhibits. If you look at Exhibits T, U, V, W, and X, these are pages from the Acosta website that clearly

detail that the services they are providing were to show them who their inventory food service manufacturers are, which include Ken's Foods, but to also indicate all the in-store services they could provide on their -- for their benefit if they needed them to, because a lot of people have short staffs or need additional help. Acosta would go in, for a fee, to provide these services in store. This included, you know, stocking. This included setting up and tearing planograms and displays, and perhaps showing pricing modifications and sales on the shelving.

Again, we did not pay Acosta to do this. Now, we do admit that Acosta was -- First of all, Acosta was working, as I would say, both sides of the aisle. They were working for us to sell the product to the retail customers. They were doing extensive in-store activities on behalf of the retailers, they were being compensated for by the retailer.

Do we know how much? No? But as they said, looking at the exhibits the Respondent provided, it's very clear the exhibits, consistent with what we have been saying all along because it's industry practice, they're getting paid by both parties, the retailer that we're selling to, and the retailers themselves to provide in-store services.

We're gonna be discussing the activities that were disputed separately, but it's, again, very important to understand that Acosta is not exclusive to us. We're just one

of the many products in their portfolio that they sell to the retail establishments, and we paid them to go in, have meetings with the customers, retail customers, and make a sale, and they did this for us.

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For the commercial food service, those are handled through third party distributors, and again, Sysco, US Foods. FTB has not expressed any concern about the third party distributors.

Our California sales team consisted of two senior national chain account managers, and a corporate chef. Now, taxpayer's products are unique in the fact that its products actually go into a food item, they are not used exclusively separate from a food item, so in order to display the product's versatility, we would use a chef as part of the sales presentation to go into the -- the -- and work in their kitchen to prepare food samples, okay?

The food samples could be a salad, could be a sandwich, could be some other item of food, but the whole point of the chef on there was to allow the chef, the chef is the buyer that they're selling to, the culinary expert in the -- the food service business. We're going in and selling to the buyer, who's the chef. They're the one that's gonna be using the product in their food, so we go meet with them.

They would prepare small menu items. They would give the chef a menu card that explained what was in, what was being

sold as a targeted sales presentation, and explain how the product could be used in different ways. They could use it in, perhaps in a salad, or a sandwich, or on a burger. It showed the versatility of a specific product that was being sold, and then from there on the chef, if the in-store food service chef had questions, it was easier for them to understand through the corporate chef what the product entailed, then from the sales team who had no real culinary experience.

The corporate chef was instrumental to the sales process, and as Marie has told me, and I'll let her briefly say, the value added by when they started using chefs as part of these food service sales presentation teams.

MS. JOHNSON: Yeah. The way it's been explained to me is just being able to have the two chefs get together and talk, and talk the same language just makes it a lot easier to get them to want to bring Ken's product in to use in their menus and on their items. And sales have increased since we brought chefs on.

MS. FREEMAN: Now, the chefs aren't used on every single sales presentation, because there's only, at any given time, there was one chef. Again, David Mack was only there through October of 2011 and participating in sales presentations throughout the western U.S., and then you add Gregory Schweizer who came on in -- on March 5th of 2012 and

was there for the duration of tax years, but again, he was based in Texas, and brought in when necessary to attend these and participate through creating these small menus, and basically giving them food samples during the food presentation to encourage placing a sales order.

The food service team, as well as the retail service teams, took every available opportunity to make a sale, and there's numerous comments throughout the record by Respondent that they didn't understand why they kept going back in so frequently.

Every -- Every meeting with a customer is an opportunity to make a sale. That's the point. All we do is sell product. We don't take product back. We don't do repairs. We don't do training. Every opportunity that they -- the staff -- sales staff had with the customer was to make a sale, you know, and keep the relationship going, because if -- Unfortunately, there's a lot of turnover in clients, and if the client that you're talking to leaves, then you have to start all over with the relationship just to get in to make a sale, so creating, maintaining sales relationships with these clients so you could get back in to make subsequent sales was crucial to the solicitation process, and absolutely ancillary, and absolutely necessary, because once you lose a contact, you have to start all over and figure out how you can get back in with that client, because there's a thousand other food retailers out

there in line waiting to get in if you lose that contact.

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So with respect to the corporate chef, they were responsible -- they were a part of the team. They would do pre-sale -- pre-sales presentation targeted research about the customer they were going to see, with their menu, look at their flavor profile, perhaps even meet with the culinary staff in store and kind of figure out what they get, because the whole point was to make a successful sale. Not all sales are successful, but you didn't want to go and waste a customer's time by making a presentation on, say, Ranch dressings when they're looking for a marinara sauce. It is just a complete waste of your time. It was not going to be a successful sale, and it's gonna be a complete waste of a customer's time, and they're gonna think you don't know what you're doing, and probably not let you back for subsequent sales.

During the sales presentation, they would buy groceries, take to the customer's location and do a -- prepare the food fresh on site, because you can't bring -- You can't make the salads in the -- ahead of time, because the product will wilt. You can't, you know, make the sand witches ahead of time, because then the bread's gonna get all soggy, so basically they -- the process was they would bring food items on site to the customer location and prepare the samples, and at times they would prepare menu cards that showed you, this is the

dressing we're using from Ken's, and this is -- this is what's in this particular item, and what you put together, so you could get an idea of flavors, versatility, and each of the cards would tell you what they were proposing that the client buy, which was either maybe a new sauce, new seasonal sauce, existing sauce, or a sauce that maybe met a customer's flavor profile. Something they could use that's consistent with what they would want.

2.

Once the sales presentation is done, the client makes a purchasing decision. Menu cards are discarded. The client can keep them if they want. The customer can keep them if they want, but we have no use for them, because they're specifically prepared samples for that customer to display that customer's -- products that customer might be interested in, which is the dressings.

The corporate chef served an essential role on the sales solicitation process, because again, he could effectively communicate with the buyer in the room, which is the professional chef or culinary expert at the customer, and again, as result of adding a chef to the sales team, the sales by the commercial food service had increased over the years once they started adding chefs to the sales team.

It's important note to understand that the Appellant has other corporate chefs that serve a distinct function. The sales team member chef was paid similarly to the rest of the

sales team. They got bonuses based on sales. They also had corporate chefs in Marlborough that were involved with research, development, working directly with customers to perhaps add a menu item to the customer's specific menu.

The customers would approach Ken's Food and say, "I'm thinking about perhaps adding a burger, a garlic Parmesan burger to our menu. Do you have any sauces you have that might work with that so we can add that item?" So we're not developing the menu item. The customers are coming to us with ideas, like, "This is what we want. Do you have a sauce that works with it?"

Ken's Foods has 885 formulas of sauces, and over 2,000 products, so even if I made a presentation in California for a particular food item, if it wasn't perfect, we could then send, and they said, "Well, I wish it was more like this." We could send the customer's inquiry back to Marlborough and say, "Do we have anything closer to this off the shelf in our 885 formulas that might work?" And they could send back samples to have the customer see if that's closer to the flavor profile they're looking for, and if not, if they say, "No. That's not it. We are looking something more like this," they could then send the customer's inquiry back to Marlborough and say, "They want it tweaked like this."

And we do have the ability to customize products if it doesn't fit within that 885 that we already have, so, but all

of those activities for product customization would occur in Marlborough, and all we as the sales would be doing is, you know, facilitating inquiry for modifications and bringing the sample back and say, "Is this closer?" So there was some back and forth when they were looking for a more specific product, but all we were doing is facilitating the inquiries that were going back and forth between Marlborough and the customer, and the whole point of these inquiries was to make a sale.

All R&D, all modifications, those all occurred in Marlborough, because that's the location of the commercial kitchen, and again, with respect to the issue of -- the issue has come back as far as menu ideation regarding the chef. The whole idea of that is the customer, we're going to a customer and trying to sell a particular sauce. We come up with a variety of offerings and, you know, samples, either sandwiches, salads, etc., to showcase the product, and the whole point of these little samples is to sell the product. The angle of every one of these presentations were customer-specific to sell the product.

With respect to the inquiries in Marlborough to help them create, you know, maybe a limited-time special, they told us what they wanted, and all we did was match them up with some of our 885 products, and if there wasn't something that was perfect, we did have the ability to make customized products, but it was purely for the purpose of selling a dressing or

sauce to the end customer.

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Again, solicitation of the sales, here Wrigley is the primary case. What constitutes solicitation of orders and speech or conduct explicitly or implicitly to invite orders, or activities that neither implicitly or explicitly invite an order but are entirely ancillary to the request for an order. It's also well accepted that inquiries, whether it's complaint or for modifications we're allowed, the sales staff, as part of the sales process, we're allowed to submit inquiries outside the state, and those are activities are being -- all we're doing is facilitating communication for the activities occurring outside the state. We are not performing those activities here.

We're also going to add here before we get into the specific questions that were asked, this comment that Skagen's Design has held that inspecting, rearranging, or refilling, basically, product cases, display cases, are permitted activities. These are the planograms. We're also acknowledging that our business is not exactly like Wrigley in that we -- the product in and of themselves is not used. It goes into another product, and that basically we do have the ability to modify our product at the request of a customer to make the sale, but those modification activities occur outside the state in Marlborough, Massachusetts.

So getting into the actual questions that were provided

to us as the issues in dispute, we're gonna go through them all. Some of them were, in our mind, grouped, so we'll provide -- for the ones we think they're groupings, we'll provide the specific -- a general answer to each one of those, and then get into a discussion.

JUDGE KLETTER: Just asking, the questions are FTB's questions, or what questions?

MS. FREEMAN: They were the questions provided at the preconference hearing as the issues in dispute. The FTB's questions by Respondent.

JUDGE KLETTER: Okay. Thank you.

2.

MS. FREEMAN: So the first issue in dispute as suggested by Respondent was whether job descriptions submitted by Respondent as Exhibits Y, Z, and Double A, accurately depict the duties and responsibilities of Appellant's corporate chef, national account managers, and regional -- retail regional managers in California during the years, and our answer is no, and then the explanation for that is I myself, as an auditor, have always told the auditors auditing us that duty statements provided are always generally overly-broad and designed to protect the employer from being sued for working out of class by the employee.

The job duty statements that Respondent referenced were for the subsequent years. These were not provided for this particular year, and again, these employees, they are not

specific to California. These employees were working within and without California, because they were assigned to basically the west coast, west region, and we don't have an idea of what each of these employees was specifically doing every day during the tax years, however, Appellant did actually interview employees in each category, and we believe the best way to understand the duties performed in California was from the interviews that were conducted by Respondent. Those Exhibits are A, C, E, and F.

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So job interviews are in there. We -- We went through them, because there's some -- clarifications were needed to those responses, so the clarifications provided are relevant.

So that's our response to the first issue. That the duty statements are for subsequent years, and then even in and of themselves are overly-broad and not necessarily specific to what was actually happening, which is no different than a duty service statement provided to a civil service employment employee in California. As a formal civil service employee in California, my job duty statement didn't reflect what I was doing in my job. I mean, I had the title, but it wasn't particularly accurate to what I was doing, which is why I believe the Respondent's interviews best reflect for the most part what was occurring in California.

The second issue the FTB has raised is whether a corporate chef in California, whether there was a corporate

chef in California during the taxable year ending April 30th, 2013. The answer was there was a part-time employee during the tax time ending April 30th, 2013. The first chef, David Mack, resigned on August 29th, 2011, and there was a period of time where there was no corporate chef coming into California to participate in California sales presentations.

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He was replaced by Gregory Schweizer on March 5th, 2012. This employee was not based in California. Was assigned to multiple states in the west region, and would come in as needed to participate in specific targeted sales presentation in the food service side. The corporate chefs were never used in retail sales.

The next four questions -- Was there six or four?

MR. ELLIOTT: Three.

MS. FREEMAN. 3, 4, and 5 are the next questions I will be answering, and I'm gonna provide a general answer to each of those three after I read them, and then provide a basic explanation, and all these relate to the corporate chef.

The first question was whether the corporate chef while in California provided culinary support services for Appellant's restaurants and food service customers, such as menu ideation, developing recipes.

The answer is -- the short answer, to be followed-up with discussion, is no.

The second question is whether the corporate chef's

demonstrations to customers and customer chefs were limited strictly to sales solicitation process, or whether these demonstrations occurred outside of sales solicitation process and served an independent business purpose beyond the solicitation of orders, such as insuring the proper use of Appellant's product.

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The short answer is yes. All the corporate chef's activities were limited or ancillary to solicitation, as we will subsequently discuss.

The third question related to the corporate chef was whether the corporate chef ideation using Appellant's product was part of a targeted sales presentation, or whether it served independent business purpose apart from strictly soliciting orders, such as increasing sales of Appellant's product by developing a variety of uses and applications, and the short answer is all of the activities were part of a targeted sales presentation or otherwise to make a sale through individual meetings with customers, and then we're gonna now discuss the chef's activities that were at issue.

JUDGE KLETTER: And then, this is Judge Kletter. I just want to let you know that you have 45 minutes left. You're halfway through your time.

MS. FREEMAN: I'm almost halfway through, and I'll shorten it up, but I still have to talk slow for him.

Okay. The Appellant's corporate chef that was part of

the sales team is distinct from the corporate chefs in headquarters, and I'm not going to be talking about, per se, the chef's activities at headquarters, because that's a separate function. We're talking about the chefs that were part of the sales team. The corporate chef's demonstrations were customer specific. They related to sales solicitation process and demonstrations for a specific customer. Okay?

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So they're not -- Other than -- The only person that knows what particularly is being made is the customer and the sales team. They don't share these ideas with anybody else, They do prepare, they do come up with ideas. They talk to the customer, the proposed customer, to figure out what they want, okay? They look at their menus, they do research about the customer so that they can do a targeted sales presentation so nobody's wasting their time. That doesn't mean the customer's gonna buy what they're looking for, but the whole point is, there's no point in going in, again, with, you know, Ranch dressing if that's not what they're looking They're gonna -- You're wasting their time, and these for. people have limited time, and they don't let cold calls in. You have to have a relationship to get in.

So now that you've got the appointment, you're gonna make a sales presentation. You wanna make the best use of your time and resources, so the corporate chef would take and get an idea of what the customer might be interested in based on

their flavor profile, based on conversations with them, and they're gonna go in and, say, make a product presentation. Here's the salad using this, you know, new seasonal dressing. It's Italian dressing. Here's another salad with two of our different salad dressings, because again, I have 8,500 or 885 different formulas. I'm not bringing them all in. I'm just bringing in a few that I think will match, and then basically letting the chef taste the food to see if it's something they might be interested in, and if they're not, he can say, "Well, maybe we can get you these other flavor things." You know, they can inquire back to Marlborough and see if they have something else, but generally the whole point is to get them an idea of the versatility of the product, the flavor of the product, and make a sale, and it has been a very successful process using a chef on the team.

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Now, is it common? I mean, look at all the other cases. You don't seen any cases that have a similar product or TPP footprint where you don't need to do training. You don't need to do follow-up. You know, are you using it properly? These companies know how to use my dressings and sauces in their product, and they're free to use as much or as little as they want. They're not modifying them. They're just -- It's an issue of quantity. These people are fully trained on how to use the sauces. There's no need for training.

We are -- He is creating nominal recipes using, you know,

salad, and ingredients in the salad, but the dressing is the dressing, right? They're not changing the dressing that they're testing with the client or the proposed customer, and again, the role here was purely for a sales role. As a -
Even though they were culinary, they're a chef, their whole role is to support the sales team to get the customer to buy the product through tasting of the product. Through providing product samples, and product sampling is a permitted activity. You're allowed to hand out samples.

What we're finding in reviewing the Appellant or
Respondent's brief is they seem to be hung up on the fact that
this individual was a corporate chef and was culinary. Well,
yes. We do have a chef, culinary, preparing samples for
culinary customer. You don't want somebody who doesn't know
how to prepare food to make a presentation to a professionally
trained chef. It would make us look foolish and probably
never even get invited back.

We don't tell the chefs how to use or show them how to use the sauce. The chefs are fully trained. They can make the sauces themselves. Not necessarily the exact ones down to the formula. They know how to make sauces. They know how to use sauces, and if we were to show them how to use it, they would look at us and probably throw us out. That's a no-go. It's an insult to a culinary expert to show them how to do something that they

already know how to do.

All orders that were potentially placed were then sent back to Marlborough for approval and fulfillment, and again, the culinary chef, like the other members of the sales team, didn't take the order. They seem hung up on the fact that he never took orders. Well, none of the sales members took orders. Again, remember they have an EDI process through the distributor to place the order through the distributor. The whole goal is then to let them know about our products, show them where they can place the order, and have them place the order with the distributor, because again, the distributor buys the product from us and resells to the customer in this case.

And while I'm citing Pub 1050, which has since been basically withdrawn, it is consistent with the Wrigley case, so what's outlined in Pub 1050, despite not being a citable document, still is consistent with Wrigley and has some valid points, and what we would point out, that carrying samples of promotional materials for display or distribution without charge falls within Public Law 86-272 and is permitted. All the chef is doing is preparing food samples using their product and handing them out free of charge during the sales solicitation process.

Respondent has also brought up Kennametal, Inc. versus Commissioner in arguing that they did not explicitly and

implicitly provide an order, but rather served to complete sales. That's completely inaccurate. This was part of a targeted sales presentation to a specific customer, and entirely, the whole point of the presentation was to make a sale with that customer of that product, or if they didn't like that product, find something else back at headquarters that we can provide more samples of, but again, the whole point is to make a sale of that sauce, or dressing, or marinade to that customer. That was the whole point.

So Kennametal we find is readily distinguishable. We weren't making presentations to a hundred customers. We were making a targeted presentation to a single customer. Any material that we handed out we either threw away, if the customer wanted to keep it, that was their business. We didn't charge for them, and we didn't reuse them, because, again, this was targeted to a specific customer.

Respondent also made comments about the corporate chef going individually to customers locations to -- to talk to the -- the corporate chef. Again, every opportunity to get in front of a customer is an opportunity to make a sale. He did not show people how to use the product. He may have displayed the versatility of the product in an effort to make a sale, but it was not training -- there is no training involved here related to the Appellant's products. It comes in a bottle. It comes in a one-gallon jug. They know how to apply the

product. They need no training. They already got it when they were in school. In the culinary schools. And the individual product demonstrations were the sole purpose of implicitly or explicitly soliciting an order.

Again too, the point that us not showing them how to use the product, it clearly states on FAQs on their website what other possibility uses exist for my Ken's dressings. It says, "We cannot tell you all the possibilities for Ken's products since your own taste, imagination defines them." So again, we're not showing, or demonstrating, or telling anybody how to use our product. We're selling the product. We care about volume, but how they choose, or how much they choose to use on the products that they sell to their customers is no concern of ours, because the more they use, the better.

The other issue here with respect to the chefs, again, I think I've kind of gone over this, is menu ideation. Okay. California corporate chef, their role was to have a customer as a target, research them, come up with some food tasting options for the same product, and then meet in person, make the food product with the sales team present, make the sales presentation through the culinary expert chef tasting the food, having follow-up discussions, and placing the order. That was the role of the sales presentations, okay?

That would -- The menu ideation that the FTB is concerned about are these food samples, so the only thing in there

unique is which dressing we put in them, right? And making sure we're meeting what we think the client is looking for.

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The other concept of menu ideation occurs in Marlborough where the commercial kitchen is located. Commercial kitchen is the place where you have to do R&D. It is required, you know, regulatorily, so they would have -- They could figure out products to send back if they didn't like the exact profile within the 885 different, you know, formulas. If they didn't like something, they would come back from the sales team and say, "Well, they didn't like that. They want slight --" They could modify the product, but all that is occurring in Marlborough, and all we're doing is facilitating the customer's inquiry to make a sale here in California. They would then send product samples back to see if they could find a product the client was satisfied with, and if so, they would consummate the sale.

There was other options where the client would come to you and say, "I have this product, and I want you to contract manufacture for me." All of that would occur in Marlborough, okay? So we could do contract manufacturing, make a sauce based on what they gave us, and distribute it to them, and make a sale.

The other option was we had customers who would come to us and say, "I want a new burger. What sauces, and I want this sort of flavor profile, what sauces do you have?" They

would go through their existing formulas to see if there was something they had that would meet. If they were satisfied the customer would make a sale based on the specific request from a specific client to buy a product, or if there wasn't something that was perfect, they would attempt to in Massachusetts make a product would satisfy them for their new product, okay?

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We're not developing the recipes, per se. They say they want a burger. We're trying to match a sauce with their product. We're not -- Again, they might want a salad. We're trying to match a sauce with what they're asking for, which is a new menu item, so we're -- all we're doing is matching our products, or creating a product for the idea they've already came up with, so I'm trying to clarify, we're not creating recipes, we're trying to match our product, or create a product for a product idea they already came up with.

In the course of Respondent's briefing we also noticed that they are overly concerned about how many times we're actually going to visit a customer. It's hard to fathom. The whole point of meeting with customers is to make a sale. The more times we meet with a customer, the better.

Like, we want to make sales, and if the customer is gonna let us in weekly, monthly, every three months. They want us to check in so we know -- that they know we care about them and we maintain our relationship. Even if it's just checking

in, it's still an opportunity to make a sale, so how many times the customer, or us, the Respondent, or Appellant is going in to meet with the customers to me, every opportunity to meet with the customer is an opportunity to make a sale, because again, we don't do R&D. We don't do training in state. There is not really anything to train them on. We've sold them on salad dressing. All we can do is follow-up to see if we can sell more salad dressing next time.

The next question Respondent raised as an issue in dispute was whether the corporate chef and national account managers worked closely with or served as a liaison between Appellant's customers and its R&D team when working on projects, such as product matching or product creation such that these activities serve an independent business purpose beyond solicitation.

I'll keep this one short. The whole point of product matching and product creation was to create a sale for a specific customer, okay? If perhaps a company had an existing supplier, but they wouldn't give them the formula, and they come to us and say, "We want to buy it from you for cheaper, can you match the product?" The customer would then give the sales team, which is trying to make a sale, a product sample which would -- all the team here would do is give the product sample as an inquire from the customer to see if they can make a sale. Give it to the R&D team in Marlborough to see if they

can make the salad dressing, okay?

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It's a yes or no question, and sometimes it would take multiple tries. Maybe they did it the first time, it wasn't an exact match, and they say, "No. It's not quite it." They would send it back. All we are doing is facilitating an inquiry for an order, right? And if it was successful, we would make a sale for that specific customer, okay? That's product matching.

Product creation, again, if I have 885 formulas and one of them doesn't work, but there's something close or something different they want, they would go to the sales team and say, "It's not quite what I want. What else can you do?" So the sales team would send the customer's inquiry regarding the flavor profile back to the R&D team back in Massachusetts, cause you can't do any of that work here, and the R&D team would work on it, they would come up with a sample, send it back, they would give it to the sales team to do another presentation to the customer to see if it's what they wanted.

There could be multiple back and forths, but again, we're just facilitating the inquiry. We're not doing anything, and the whole point of these inquiries from the customer is to make a sale, so there's no purpose from this product matching or product creation beyond trying to make a sale of the specific product that meets their needs for that customer.

So that was a question that they had asked as far as

during the preconference hearing as an issue in dispute, and again, they also, again, still had questions, why do you keep going back to the customer? Like I said, our view is every -- All we do is sell. We don't train. You either buy your product or you don't. The more times we can get in front of a customer, the better. Even if we were going there to meet with them to match one product, there's an opportunity to even sell something else, so there should have not been any issues in the Respondent's briefing about how many times we went to visit somebody. All we do is sell. It's -- All we're doing is trying to sell, either through the food service or the retail customers.

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The seventh question was whether the corporate chef and national account managers collected customer competitor and competitor information, and identified market opportunities that served independent business purposes beyond solicitation of orders, such that the Appellant would engage in these activities independently whether they're conducted by the sales or culinary staff. What I would point out is none of the orders are placed with the sales staff, okay?

The orders go in directly through an EDI system. Acosta places them on behalf of a customer. All of the orders are received and approved outside of the state. Even with the distributors, the distributor places the order with -- through the EDI system, and it is approved outside the state, so the

local staff does not have access to that information. All of that data, if it's analyzed, it's outside the state.

Now, they can use that data to identify sales opportunities to the staff that they will then communicate. You know, you should go to this customer, because they're not buying any of our stuff. They'll know that from the sales data that they have, or you should try selling this particular product to that customer, and stop selling this one, because nobody's buying it, so the data they're receiving back locally is to further target their sales efforts and refine the sales efforts for specific products in order to make an effective sale, but again, they're not mining the data. They're no—They don't get the data. All the data is received in Marlborough through the electronic system, and all that they get back from Massachusetts is information to further refine their sales efforts.

In the discussion there was a reference to one -- In one of the employee interviews there was a reference that Georgia Robbie did in one case get a competitor's sample and submit it to Marlborough to see if they could product match to take this, to basically steal the customer from the competitor. There was only one instance of that that we found in the records we had.

And basically, the whole purpose of obtaining a competitor's sample in that case was they wanted to see if

they could acquire the customer and place an order with that customer for that same or similar product. We believe that's part of the solicitation process, looking for new customers and actually affirmatively attempting to make a sale.

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Review of the market data and competitor data, as far as what's selling, all of that, that when it's provided is part of the due diligence to make sure I'm making an effort to -- I'm making an informed sales pitch, so that if I know what is selling, I can make a targeted sales pitch. It's making an educated sales presentation. We're not using -- None of the marketing happens here. None of the data analysis happens here. What's happening is we're getting refined data to refine our sales efforts to make a sale.

The next issue was -- that was indicated was in dispute was whether the national account managers quarterly meetings with customers, which included business reviews focused on relationships with customer, were post-solicitation activities that served an independent business purpose beyond solicitation.

What we're pointing out here is sales solicitation has evolved over time since Wrigley. You can't just walk up and knock on someone's door. You have to have relationships.

Cold calls are frowned upon and rarely taken, and in an age of preferred service providers, relationships are report -- required to get in just to meet the client. You need to come

to the client prepared, you need to be familiar with their business, and you have to make it sure that they know you care about their business, and you want to partner with them to sell the -- their goods so that they can -- sell goods to them so they can sell goods to their customers, so creating, maintaining an ongoing account maintenance to make sure customers know you care is essential, because if you don't show the customer that you're, you know, following-up with them, you know, even quarterly, there is a hundred service providers standing right behind you that are willing to step in your shoes and take over to show the customer that you care about them and that you're gonna make sure you pay attention to them, and make sure that you have the best business relationship to sell the products in question with that client.

The Respondent seems concerned that our customer -Again, Dan Dillon, remember, he's -- there's only two people
in the state during the year, and they are part-time in the
state serving tens of thousands of customers. They seem
concerned that our customer, we're going in every quarter to
check in on the client. Well, again, every touch point with a
client is an opportunity to sell a product, right? We're not
going to give up every -- any opportunities to meet with those
clients, if they let us in. I mean, the fact that you can get
in quarterly, often is unusual. Sometimes it's less

frequently than that, and these were basically with the larger clients, and they were using Acosta for the rest of the opportunities to get in and make the sales, but here we're making sure for the bigger client, they know we care, we're coming in, checking in to see if there are any product orders we can place. This is absolutely part and ancillary to the sales solicitation process, and if there's client turnover in their staffing, and the person you have a contact with leaves, and you're not paying attention to that client and meeting with them, the odds are you're gonna be out. Somebody's gonna be out, and back in on -- in place of you making sales that you now no longer can make, and you're gonna have to reestablish those relationships with those clients, because again, cold calls just don't happen anymore.

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If you read the court case in Wrigley, they declined to conclude that all post-sale activities were necessary and beyond the scope of solicitation. We're arguing that these quarterly meetings with the clients are part of the solicitation process. We're going in, checking in on the clients with -- in hoping to implicitly or explicitly make a sale. Even though they take place after the first sale, once you make the first sale, everything, technically, is post-sale solicitation of an order, so again, the only reason we go back in is to make the next sale, right? And we may not make the sale every time, but we need to be back in there and FTB's

assumption that post-sales contact isn't sales related is without merit. There's no support for that position, and I would finally comment, every customer knows when you show up at the door why you're there. You're there to try and make a sale.

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The next issue that we have was 9. There's only 11. We're on 9. Was whether stock checks and retail audits were performed by the retail managers and Acosta to verify display price and compliance, such that these stock checks served an independent and recheck audits serve independent business functions beyond the solicitation of orders, such as ensuring proper use of Appellant's trade spend, and our answer to that question is no.

So retail audits are really no different than inspecting a planogram. Retail audit has been blown out of proportion in this case as far as what it means, so basically, when we first set up a relationship with a client, a retail client, because that's what we're talking about, retail clients, is we go in with the assistance of Acosta, because basically he's representing both sides of the aisle, to establish how much space we're gonna get in that retail location. Again, space is horizontal, how many feet in, what's the terminology for that?

MS. JOHNSON: Facings.

MS. FREEMAN: How many facings we get. I assume the

facings is how many bottles in a space. How many facings we get horizontally, and vertically, and then also at times, where it's located vertically, 'cause there's obviously a preferred one, eye level, so we have established planograms, we've developed our own. We don't provide -- Acosta doesn't provide planogram service for us. We don't even know what that is, honestly. Planograms are planograms.

Everyone has gone into the store the last, I don't know, a lot of time, decades, and a grocery store shelf is a grocery store shelf, right? There's four or five high. The ones that I usually want are so high I can't reach them. I have to climb up on the ladders, but the whole point is what's on those shelves is -- When we go in initially for a retail client, we're negotiating how much space we get, okay? And based on how much space we get, that's what we anticipate we're going to get, and we do periodically go into the store, not very often, because again, there's only two individuals doing this, and Acosta's working with us on those two to verify, you know, our product is where we were told it was gonna be in the space it was gonna be.

But on top of that, the trade spend they get is based on volume, right? So the more volume we sell, the more trade spend we get, and the trade spend is used to advertise our product, you know? Maybe we end up one week on an end cap, you know? They switch those out. We're not the ones

switching those out. That would be Acosta. We don't pay them for that.

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We give them money to advertise our products, either on the shelf where they have the sales little tags, or in the mailers that go out, so what's important to know is that when we're doing these retail audits, we're usually doing them in conjunction with a sales call. We go and review, which is allowed, inspect the display case as discussed in Skagen. See if our product's there. See if it's low. As Dan Dillon has indicated, he was the retail manager. He goes and he looks to see, you know, what's there, what's missing, are they low to see if they can do a reorder, and they go back and meet with, you know, the buyers in the store.

He does not pull product from the shelf. He's made that clear, and it's important to point out that if there's expired product or damaged product, those products aren't returned, they're destroyed, okay? If -- The only time you're really gonna see a product returned is if it's the wrong order, okay? Basically they'll call up, they'll have contact, even if they tell in-store staff, it all has to be handled through Marlborough. Tell them they got the wrong product. They'll be arrangements made to be picked up at the customer store and returned to locations outside the state. We don't have any locations in the state. If it's expired, or damaged, or returned by a customer, it gets thrown away. The store gets

reimbursed for those products.

JUDGE KLETTER: Ms. Freeman, just want to let you know you have 15 minutes of the presentation left.

MS. FREEMAN: Okay. I'm almost done.

The retail audits, again, have been blown out of proportion. Really, they are reviewing the retail audits that they go in, we have -- What exhibit is that? 10. Exhibit 10 is an example of a retail audit. They'll come in the store, and basically, again, they're not in every store, they don't go there often, because they have limited time and effort. They'll go through the store.

Once a year generally, the retail managers would go through the stores prior to Memorial Weekend once, and each of the retail managers would hit seven or eight customers that day. They'd go into the store, which they hadn't been in to or had only been to who knows how many times, infrequently, glance through their — their space in the planogram in the store, which is the sales, you know, exhibit, and see what it looks like, what's there, what's missing, and then go back and proceed to make a sales presentation to the store to solicit sales.

So first of all, the retail audits are there for stock check purposes when Acosta does it to see if it needs to be -- the stock needs to be redone, and then on top of that they'll go through, you know, spend five minutes reviewing the case to

make sure everything is accurate, and then spend the rest of the time during the retail audit to discuss sales and placing orders during their, again, their pre-Memorial Day, you know, anticipation of summer barbecue season is when they -- when our staff does it.

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Acosta may go in throughout the year periodically to verify the planogram, you know, it's in place still, hasn't fallen down, making sure the product's where it's supposed to be, and the quantity is supposed to be.

Again, clients get paid for trade spend based on products sold, not about -- not the store shelving spacing. But, obviously, the more spacing you have, the more you will sell, and the more trade spend you'll get.

They also questioned whether or not the retail audits performed by the retail managers occurred more than once per year over Memorial Weekend. Again, they go in once a year for the pre-Memorial Day Weekend kickoff of summer for retail audits, but again retail audits are nothing more than inspecting the in-store planogram, which is permitted under Skagen. We're allowed under Skagen to inspect the displays to make sure everything's where it's supposed to be.

Oh, yeah. So in Exhibit 20 we gave you an example planogram. It will be representative of anything you've ever seen in your life as a child going through the store. You know, salad dressing on the shelf. The only question is how

much space I got. We also gave you Exhibit 21, shows you the standard -- 21, isn't it?

2.

Oh. Number 19 was some sample product shelving and photos that kind of showed you what it would look like, and the amount of space that we had, and it varies by store, and then example or Exhibit 21 is the standard product shelf life of our products reflecting that the product generally has an extended shelf life and would turn over and not be expired, but again, expired product is disposed of. It's not returned, and the store gets credit for damaged products or expired products.

Number 10, again, again, a retail audit is an inspection of a planogram, which is permitted by Skagen, and by Wrigley, and retail managers generally only did it on the pre-sale Memorial Weekends. They may have done it occasionally other times, but you gotta remember, you have them operating in the entire west region in the U.S. on this side of the Rockies, and they didn't have time to go to the store. They spent most of their time actually managing Acosta, so if they did go in the store on other times, it would have been infrequent, and again it's a permitted activity under Skagen, and in de minimis on top of that.

The next question was Acosta. There was some extensive references in Respondent's brief regarding Acosta. Question 11, whether Acosta development and implementation of

planograms or other service provided by Acosta were performed on behalf of Appellant, or only on behalf of retail customers that separately compensated Acosta for these services.

If you look at Acosta's website, which are Exhibits T, U, V, W, and X, I believe. There's extensive detail about Acosta's business. Acosta is throughout the U.S., and is support service for retail establishment. They also distribute manufacturer's food products, including Ken's Foods products. They offer, basically a centralized location for the retailer to acquire the products in store.

As far as in-store activities, we do not pay them for in-store activities. I doubt they're doing it for free. That includes putting up shelving, tearing down shelving, moving product around, restocking. We don't pay for any of that.

Now, Acosta may come in and review our particular planogram to see if it needs to be restocked. We don't pay them to restock it. All we do is pay them to -- when the retail establishment buys our product. They get a commission. All that data is collected in Massachusetts, because it goes through the EDI system. We generate the invoice at Acosta. Marie can attest to how that process works. I'll give her two seconds to do that.

MS. JOHNSON: Yeah. It's what we had talked about earlier when we run the sales report, take off any invoice type deductions, allowances, shorts, damages, and pay a

1 | commission rate based on the net sales.

MS. FREEMAN: And you cut the checks to Acosta?

MS. JOHNSON: We write the checks in Marlborough,

yeah.

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MS. FREEMAN: You do?

MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

MS. FREEMAN: So Acosta does not generate an invoice to us. All that data we collect through the EDI system that has the invoices input, it designates who -- who -- who's the payee on the commission, which is generally Acosta, because that's our primary broker, and so we know how much sales have gone through, and how much to pay Acosta, and how much to modify their gross sales for returns, etc., and then Marie cuts the check.

So we know based on that we are not paying Acosta for any in-store service. Now, we agree they do help us negotiate the planogram, okay? But they are negotiated on behalf of both sides of the aisle. The retailer has space, we want space, Acosta wants space that's consistent with, you know, selling the most modern product, so planograms are not unique. We have our own. They don't develop planograms for us.

Again, it's store shelving. It is what it is. Whatever shelving is in the store, they're not creating it. It's just, all we're negotiating about is space, and so they help us do that. Once it's in place, we do go in and verify when we do

our annual reviews as part of the sales process to go in and look, is our product there? Is it, you know, empty? Is it full? Things like that. We don't pull the product. We don't stock the product, and then we go and proceed and meet with the protective customer and make a sale.

As far as Acosta's other activities on our behalf, we acknowledge they are an independent contractor acting on our behalf, as well as other food manufacturers, to go into the store and sell our product to the retail store, so they make meetings with existing and new customers, go in and make a sales presentation, and place an order, okay?

Customer complaints, the only complaint we'd really have that is any issue, you could have a complaint by a retail customer that bought a salad dressing in the store. They're gonna go back to the store, return it. You're gonna -They're gonna come back and ask for a price adjustment, we're gonna give it to them, but all of that price adjustment activity occurs outside of California.

Acosta, really the only thing you might find is the product, you got the wrong product, okay. They're gonna have to communicate that inquiry, that compliant, back to Marlborough. Marlborough's gonna arrange for the product to come back and be returned, but it's not gonna be returned in state. The product isn't at our location. It's at the customer's location, and since any product isn't destroyed,

it's returned.

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All the rest of the activities, if you look on Exhibits U, V, X, and W they're not -- We don't own the store. They're not -- We're not -- They're not putting up shelves for us. They're putting it up for the retail customer. They're not restocking on our behalf. They're restocking on the customer's behalf. Again, once the food's in the store, that's between the retailer and Acosta to deal with, you know, anything that needs to be changed or adjusted.

So if we're short on time, we want to reserve to use it at the end, if that's possible?

JUDGE KLETTER: This is Judge Kletter, so it looks like you have four minutes remaining. You have 19 minutes on rebuttal. We're actually going to now take a 15-minute break to allow the stenographer to rest, and if anyone needs, you know, to use the facilities or anything like that. Please make sure to mute your microphones, and I think the live stream may continue, so close your laptop screens, or don't have anything viewable. Thank you. And we'll return at 2:49 p.m.

(Pause in the proceedings from 2:35 p.m.

until 2:49 p.m.)

JUDGE KLETTER: So we're going to go ahead and go back on the record. We have 90 minutes for Franchise Tax

Board's presentation. Mr. Ivanusich, are you ready to begin?

MR. IVANUSICH: Yes, I am.

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JUDGE KLETTER: Please go ahead.

PRESENTATION

MR. IVANUSICH: Good afternoon, Judges. The issue in this case is whether the Appellant is protected from tax in California under 15 U.S.C. Section 381, which is also referred to as PL 86-272.

I'm first going to discuss the strict limitations of PL 86-272 and Appellant's burden of proof. I will then discuss Appellant's response to additional evidence submitted by FTB, since the FTB has not yet had a chance to address these arguments.

Finally, I'll go through each site of Acosta's employees and broker in California and explain why the evidence demonstrates that each of them performed activities in California that went beyond protections of PL 86-272. These employees include a corporate chef, national account managers, and regional managers. Appellant also performed activities in California through its broker referred to as Acosta.

During this presentation I hope to highlight three things. One, that since PL 86-272 provides an exemption from tax, its protection is very limited and only applies if the taxpayer's activities in the state are soliciting orders entirely ancillary to soliciting orders or de minimis. So if Appellant had even one activity that was not soliciting orders

or entirely ancillary to this, it loses all PL 86-272 protection if that activity was not de minimis.

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Two, Appellant has not provided relevant and credible evidence supporting its claims, and at times has even misstated facts or presented facts that are inconsistent with more reliable evidence, and three, there are multiple sources of evidence proving that certain unprotected activities did in fact occur.

I'll begin with PL 86-272. Under this law the state cannot impose a net income tax on a business if its only activities in the state are limited to the solicitation of orders of tangible personal property. In Wisconsin Department of Revenue versus Wrigley the Supreme Court held that the term, "solicitation of orders," is limited to two things.

One, a verbal request for orders in speech or conduct that implicitly invites an order, and two, activities that are entirely ancillary to requests for purchases, which -- activities which serve no independent business function apart from their connection to soliciting orders.

This is contrasted with activities that a company would have reason to engage in any way, but chooses to allocates to its in-state sales reps, which are not considered ancillary to solicitation. Thus, if an activity serves any other business function, it is not protected.

For example, PL 86-272 does not protect the activities

that facilitate sales. It only protects activities that facilitate the requesting of orders. The fact that an activity is related to sales is not enough, and unprotected activities are not converted into solicitation just because they are assigned to a salesperson.

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In determining the scope of solicitation the Supreme Court in Wrigley also rejected a broad interpretation that would include all activities routinely associated with solicitation or customarily performed by a sales person. As such, PL 86-272 protection is strictly limited to only request-related activities. This is evident from its application over the years. Activities that aren't the solicitation of orders only receive protection if they are de minimis.

In Wrigley, the unprotected activities were not de minimis because they occurred as a matter of regular company policy and on a continuing basis. In determining this, the activities are not viewed in isolation, but are instead taken together. In this appeal, each of the unprotected activities that will be discussed were regular parts of the employees' or brokers' responsibilities and occurred on a continuing basis, and thus were not de minimis, especially when taken together.

So just to emphasize, Appellant will not be protected at all under PL 86-272 if any of its California activities, even just a single one, is not soliciting orders or entirely

ancillary to soliciting orders, and was not de minimis.

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Before discussing Appellant's activities in California, I want to fist briefly discuss Appellant's burden of proof. It has been held that Appellant has the burden of proving that FTB's determinations are incorrect, and that unsupported assertions are not enough to satisfy this burden.

In this case Appellant repeatedly states that FTB misconstrues the facts, however, many of the facts stated by the FTB in its briefing were pulled directly from interviews with Appellant's employees. It is important to point out that Appellant was given the opportunity to review these interviews and provide clarifications, as can be seen in Exhibit E, so the interview responses should be treated as accurate.

If Appellant now wants to claim that facts based on these interviews are wrong, it needs to provide evidence showing why. Up to this point, it has not, and instead relies on unsupported assertions. For example, we heard today about several activities related to Appellant's business, and the activities of its employees, without any indication as to where this information came from. This is not enough to overcome its burden.

It is also well settled that a taxpayer's failure to produce evidence within its control gives rise to a presumption that the evidence is unfavorable to its case.

Here, Appellant did not produce certain items of evidence that

were within its control, and would have helped provide relevant details on facts that are now at issue. These will be discussed throughout this presentation, but it should be presumed that the evidence Appellant failed to provide is unfavorable to its case.

I'll now discuss the FTB's request to submit additional evidence, which included job descriptions for Appellant's corporate chef, national accounts manager, and regional manager. These were submitted as Exhibits Y, Z, and AA.

After the OTA granted this request, Appellant filed a response claiming this additional evidence was not relevant o reflective of its employee's activities in California. It points to the fact that during the audit it already provided the description for the job functions -- a description of the job functions for each position at issue, which was submitted as Exhibit B.

However, Exhibit B lacks credibility when compared to Exhibits Y, Z, and AA. Exhibit B was a Word document created by Appellant specifically for the audit in an attempt to explain the employees's responsibilities, and only Exhibit B was provided during the audit for the years at issue.

Exhibits Y, Z, and AA were not provided until later. When reviewing these documents side by side, Exhibit B contains descriptions for the national accounts manager, and regional manager that match word for word with the job descriptions in

Exhibits Z and AA, except Exhibit B differs in two ways.

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One difference is that it omits certain responsibilities listed in Exhibits Z and AA. For example, Exhibit B's list of job functions for the national accounts manager omits that they favorably negotiated pricing agreements and coordinated development of food service for proprietary products. on Exhibit B under principal accountabilities. The second difference is that Exhibit B has the term 'solicit' or 'solicitation' under responsibilities. For example, according to Exhibit AA, the regional manager's principal accountabilities included, quote, "Optimized retail execution and maximized brand exposure." In Exhibit B this was changed to read, "Optimized retail execution and maximize brand exposure through solicitation of sales, " so Exhibit B has the same description of Exhibit AA, except it added the term, "through solicitation of sales."

This is just one example of this happening. Between the national accounts manager and regional manager the terms 'solicit' or 'solicitation' were added at least 13 times, so there are many other examples too. Except for these differences, the descriptions are mostly identical, so we don't know how Appellant can claim that Exhibits Z and AA aren't relevant or accurate while also maintaining that Exhibit B is. Given the commonalities, it appears that Appellant had these job descriptions when drafting Exhibit B,

yet chose not to provide them, because it cannot be a coincidence that the descriptions in Exhibit B use not just similar but identical language to those in Exhibits Z and AA.

Also, since the only difference in Exhibit B is that it omits certain responsibilities and adds the terms 'solicit' or 'solicitation' to many of the descriptions, this gives the appears that the description in Exhibit B were intentionally framed in a way that would not exceed PL 86-272 protection. This is contrasted with Exhibits Z and AA which appear to be actual unedited job descriptions.

Furthermore, the corporate chef job description, which is Exhibit Y, was specifically submitted as the job description for Greg Schweizer, who I'll refer to as Chef Greg. This is indicated by Appellant in the e-mail included in Exhibit Y.

Chef Greg replaced Appellant's prior corporate chef,
David Mack, in 2012, and served this role during both years at
issue, which are the tax years ending April 30th, 2012 and
2013. During the audit though, Appellant stated that Chef
Greg was not an employee during the audit period under
question. This can be seen in Exhibit E, and in its briefing
Appellant claimed that FTB incorrectly asserted that it had a
corporate chef in California during each year in issue, but
today it has stated that Chef Greg was an employee beginning
in 2012, so it doesn't appear that this is at issue, but to
the extent that it is, Chef Greg's Linkedin, submitted as

Exhibit L, states that he's been a corporate chef for Appellant since March 2012, and expense reports of Appellant's employees show Chef Greg multiple times in California in 2012, and that he was employed by Appellant during these meetings.

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This proves that Chef Greg was not only a corporate chef for Appellant during both years at issue, but also that he performed activities in California. Because of this, the job descriptions for Chef G in Exhibit Y should be viewed as an accurate representation for the corporate chef's duties for these years. It is also consistent with information from the interview with the corporate chef supervisor and other evidence provided, which will be discussed.

I'll now talk about the activities of Appellant's employees and Acosta and explain why these activities went beyond soliciting orders. I'll start with the corporate chef. Appellant did not make the corporate chef available for an interview, despite requests and demands from the FTB. This can be seen in Exhibit AB where an interview with David Mack, the corporate chef before Chef Greg, was requested, and in Exhibit AC where interviews with Chef Greg were requested four times and a formal demand was issued.

The interview was not provided. Instead, the FTB was only able to interview the corporate chef supervisor, which was submitted as Exhibit A. Even just based on this interview, the corporate chef performed multiple unprotected

activities. The ones I'll focus on are the services provided to customers, ideation of new products, showing customer chefs how to use Appellant's products, and R&D related activities. Appellant has made several unsupported claims that these were not activities performed by the corporate chef or were misunderstood by the FTB, but I'll explain why the evidence shows otherwise.

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First, the corporate chef provided culinary services and resources to Appellant's food service customers, such as creating recipes for them. In the interview with the supervisor he stated that the corporate chef would, quote, "Certainly put a recipe together for the customer." This statement is supported by Appellant's culinary services website, submitted as Exhibit H, which states that it works hard to keep customers menus up to date, creates menu ideas tailored to customers' tastes, and that it works with customers on total recipe development -- Chef Greg is one of three corporate chefs featured on this page.

Appellant's current food service website also advertises its corporate chefs, including Chef Greg as being able to help customers build their business, solve customers' problems, and work with customers on developing a holistic menu strategy. This is in Exhibit Q.

All this information is consistent with the job description of the corporate chef in Exhibit Y which states

that he provides consultative culinary resources, conducts culinary ideations with customers, and should develop relationships so that customers view Appellant as a culinary resource. This is further evidence that these types of services were performed through the corporate chef. By providing additional resources and services to customers, even if these are free of charge, Appellant helps customers build their businesses, which insures continued sales.

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This is similar to Brown Group Retail versus FTB where the taxpayer's employers were used to provide free services to help retailers establish and enhance their stores. This cemented relationships with customers, and kept them in business longer by making them healthier companies. The court held that while these activities may lead to increased sales, they were not request-related activities and did not facilitate the requesting of sales.

This is also the case here. The corporate chef's ideation also involved coming up with a variety of uses for Appellant's products. When asked how the corporate chef was involved in the ideation of new dressings, the supervisor stated that this was his job. If Appellant came up with a new dressing, the corporate chef was responsible for coming up with lots of different uses so that Appellant can sell more of them. This was in Exhibit A.

Coming up with different uses of products does not fall

within the limited scope of PL 86-272 protection. This is different from a salesperson simply becoming familiar with the benefits or virtues of products for solicitation purposes. Instead, this is actually creating and developing different uses to increase marketability, which is a separate business purpose. This may generally increase sales, but it is not a request-related activity.

Next, according to the interview with the supervisor, the corporate chef met with customer chefs on his own and would, quote, "go into the customer's kitchen with the other chef and show them how to use the sauce or dressings." This was stated as a separate activity from the corporate chef's account visits with sales reps where he prepared food while the sales reps spoke with customers. This suggests that the individual meetings with customer chefs were separate from these account visits and served different purposes.

Also sauces and dressings can be more complicated than serving them exactly how they come, and a single one of Appellant's sauces can be used to create a variety of sauces for different applications. To illustrate this we provided Exhibit AD which shows that it's home style Ranch dressing can be used to make several dressings, each using different ingredients. When Appellant's products are just one of many ingredients in a sauce used for a recipe, especially if it's one created by the corporate chef, other chefs could benefit

from these meetings since the corporate chef would have more knowledge on how to use Appellant's products and their applications. This would save customers and their chefs time in trying to figure out the right mix of ingredients, while also ensuring that they are properly using Appellant's products. This is a business purpose distinct from soliciting orders.

2.4

Lastly, the corporate chef performed R&D related activities. According to the supervisor, the corporate chef communicated customer recipes to Appellant's R&D staff to develop samples for customers, and it also appears that he was involved in new product development. When asked how the corporate chef -- When asked how often the corporate chef comes up with a new dressing, the supervisor stated that it take a long time to develop a new dressing from start to finish. This was in Exhibit A.

There was no response that the corporate chef was not involved in this, and there were no clarifications to this response in Exhibit E. This is also supported by the corporate chef's job description in Exhibit Y which states that he worked with customer R&D departments in new product development and reformulations. According to this job description, the corporate chef also worked with food scientists to develop, match, and commercialize customer formulas, kept records of lab work, and participated in

testing of R&D projects, new products, and reformulations.

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At a minimum, the evidence demonstrates that the corporate chef worked closely with customers, and Appellant's R&D departments, and provided assistance when customers desired new products, but it also shows that he participated in product development and testing too. This -- with Appellant's R&D process, which is another independent business purpose.

Despite all of this evidence, Appellant claims that the FTB continues to misconstrue the corporate chef's activities, but Appellant had multiple chances to provide more information. It was given the opportunity to review and clarify answers from the interview with the corporate chef's supervisor, but it did not feel the need to provide clarification on the information just discussed. This is evident in Exhibit E.

Also, as shown in Exhibits AB and AC, FTB requested interviews with Appellant's corporate chefs, but these interviews were not provided. Appellant's failure to provide these interviews, which would have provided relevant information within its control, creates a presumption that the evidence that would have come from these interviews is unfavorable to its case, Thus Appellant has not overcome its burden of proof.

The activities of Appellant's corporate chef alone causes

Appellant to lose its PL 86-272 protection, but I'll also talk about Appellant's other unprotected activities.

I'll now turn to Acosta. As an independent contractor, Acosta can solicit sales, make sales, and maintain offices in California, but if it performs other activities for Appellant in California, Appellant will lose its PL 86-272 protection, so the question here is what activities Acosta performed for Appellant.

Appellant did not provide any contracts with Acosta describing the scope of work, and instead claims that it was general practice not to have formal agreements, but in the interview with the regional manager, which is Exhibit F, he appears to mention a contract with Acosta. When discussing contracts he states, quote, "If issues are identified, we will contact Acosta to resolve these issues per contract."

Since managing Acosta was one of the regional manager's primary job functions, he would likely be aware of whether there's a contract or not. Appellant also made no corrections to this statement in Exhibit B.

Appellant's failure to provide any agreements with Acosta should give rise to the presumption that it would have been unfavorable to its case. Without this, we're left relying on another Word document prepared by Appellant during the audit titled, "Services performed by Acosta for Ken's Food, Inc., in California," which is Exhibit G. This document states that

Acosta performed both headquarter and retail functions for Appellant in California.

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Since a contract was not provided, Acosta's website helps describe what's included in its headquarter and retail functions. I'll start with the headquarter functions. These are not activities that would normally be performed by a sale staff, and do not involve soliciting orders. There are instead designed to serve as a substitute for other activities that would be done at a client's own headquarters. For example, these headquarter functions include using space-management analytics for strategic planogram development. This can be seen in Exhibit W.

This is consistent with Exhibit G, which states that Acosta's headquarter function participated in a planogram discussion with Appellant. While advice to retailers on how to display goods may be protected, the actual development of a planogram goes beyond their advice and is steps removed from this. If not done by Acosta, this is an activity that would normally be done by Appellant's non-sales personnel.

Appellant has now provided Exhibit 11, which is an e-mail from one of its employees specifically for this appeal stating that it established its planogram standards at his headquarters and communicates its standards to Acosta for implementation at retail stores. However, according to Exhibit G, implementation at the store level is done by

Acosta's retail function, so if Acosta was only performing retail functions, such as planogram implementation, it is unclear why as stated in Exhibit G that Acosta also performed headquarter functions for it in California.

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In Exhibit G, Appellant also listed the headquarter function of participating in the planogram discussion as a separate activity from its implementation, which indicates more involvement than just this. This e-mail doesn't prove that Acosta only performed retail functions for Appellant. Even if this were the case, Acosta's website indicates that its retail functions included audits and surveys, stocking, and product recalls. This can be seen in Exhibits V and X.

This is consistent with the regional manager's interview where he stated that Acosta restocked shelves, replaced stock, participated in retail audits, and handled issues with bad products. This was in Exhibit F.

In Wrigley refilling displays using agency stock checks, replacing stock, and keeping inventory data was enough to defeat PL 86-272 protection. Likewise, in Blue Buffalo Company versus Comptroller of the Treasury the court determined that restocking retailer shelves and pulling bad products for quality control were not ancillary to solicitation. Here, Appellant was performing similar activities through Acosta.

Appellant claims that some of these activities were done

for retail customers and not Appellant, but it is has only provided exhibits showing that Acosta was paid a commission. This doesn't approve that Acosta did not perform these activities for Appellant, nor does it prove that it instead performed these activities for retail stores. There is no other evidence supporting this claim, and it actually contradicts the evidence that is available.

For example, Exhibit G specifically states that the headquarter and retail functions were services performed by Acosta for Appellant that occurred in California.

Also, based on Acosta's website, submitted as Exhibit T, its clients were brands that manufactured products, including Appellant, but there's no indication that its clients included retail stores, and the Acosta brochure, submitted as Exhibit V, states that it performs these types of retail services for consumer packaged goods companies. All of the evidence points to Acosta performing services for brands of consumer packaged goods such as Appellant.

Acosta also worked closely with Appellant's regional managers. The regional managers, along with Acosta, performed retail audits which were done to ensure display price and trade spending compliance. Appellant clarified in Exhibit E that the retail audits were done to determine the stores were in compliance with agreed-upon deals that were funded to increase sales, and that customers received promotional funds

to carry these out.

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Since Appellant is funding these deals, it makes sense that it would want to make sure that its trade spend is being properly used by the customers receiving the funds, but this is not to solicit orders. It was instead done for compliance purposes.

Appellant claims that these retail audits were de minimis because they occurred once per year, included only seven to eight customers, and took less than five minutes to complete, but the FTB is not aware of any evidence in the record supporting this, and this actually contradicts the interview with the regional manager which stated that, quote, "Retail audits take about one hour." This was in Exhibit F.

There is also evidence that the regional managers performed similar activities more frequently, and were not de minimis when taken together. While they are not referred to as retail audits, the retail manager stated in Exhibit F that he went to supermarket stores about once every couple weeks to make sure everything was as agreed upon, such as how to display and price products.

Appellant clarified that this display and price compliance was to oversee whether a store put up a display included in their trade spend, or was really offering a deal related to their trade spend. This was done to make sure that Appellant was paying out trade dollars the customer earned,

and it was verifying the displays and promotions being offered. This was stated in Exhibit E. Thus, similar to retail audits, these visits were done not to solicit orders, but to ensure the proper use of Appellant's trade spend in compliance with agreed-upon items.

2.

Lastly, I'll briefly discuss the national account manager's activities related to identifying market opportunities. According to the interview with the national account manager, which is Exhibit C, they met frequently with existing customers. For example, if working on a project like product matching, they will meet with a customer once a week.

As part of this process, the national accounts manager also picked up competitor samples. In Exhibit E Appellant clarified that the samples were used to match a product and take a customer from a competitor. This information is then communicated to the R&D team, which is used to match -- match products or create new products. This was also in Exhibit E.

These were therefore activities that facilitate product matching in taking over competitor products. In Blue Buffalo it was held that providing information regarding market opportunities and competitor activities was characterized as competitive research and a collection of market data, which is a business objective distinct from soliciting orders.

Here, by regularly meeting with customers for product matching and making that competitor promise to take over those

products, the national accounts managers were identifying market opportunities, collecting competitor information, and providing this information to R&D. As held in Blue Buffalo, this serves a business purpose independent from soliciting orders and is not protected.

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As a final note, Appellant provided Exhibits 10 through 23 for this hearing, but it does note appear that these exhibits provide any information related specifically to the job duties or activities of the corporate chef, national accounts manager, or regional managers, and many of these exhibits are dated from 2024, which is more than a decade after the years on appeal, so they should not be considered relevant for these years. These exhibits may generally describe certain aspects of Appellant's current business, but they do not prove that the information relied on by the FTB, such as the interviews and job descriptions, are incorrect.

So just to summarize, PL 86-272 is very limited, and only provides protections for request-related activities that serve no other business purpose other than soliciting requests for orders. If any single activity does not involve soliciting a request, or is entirely ancillary to soliciting a request, and is not de minimis, PL 86-272 protection is gone. Here, Appellant's employees and broker regularly performed a variety of activities outside of this protection. They were not de minimis, especially when taken together.

1 Appellant claims that FTB misconstrues these activities, 2 but it has not provided sufficient or credible evidence 3 supporting its claims. It has also failed to provide relevant 4 evidence within its control, despite requests and demands from 5 the FTB, which gives rise to a presumption that this information would have been unfavorable to Appellant. 6 7 Based on this, Appellant has not overcome its burden of proving that FTB's determination that it was not protected 8 under PL 86-272 was incorrect. The FTB therefore requests 9 10 that the OTA sustain this determination.

If there are any questions, I'm happy to try and answer them.

JUDGE KLETTER: This is Judge Kletter. I just wanted to confirm, Franchise Tax Board, did you have any questions for Appellant's witness?

MR. IVANUSICH: No, we don't.

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JUDGE KLETTER: Okay. Great. So I am going to turn it over to my panel. Beginning with Judge Leung, did you have any questions for either of the parties?

JUDGE LEUNG: I am going to hold my question until after the Appellants finish their closing statement.

JUDGE KLETTER: Thank you. And, Judge Johnson, do you have any questions for either of the parties?

JUDGE JOHNSON: Thank you. I'll also hold questions for now.

1	JUDGE KLETTER: Okay. So it looks like I'm also
2	going to hold my questions, so Appellant, you'll have 19
3	minutes on rebuttal. Are you ready to begin your
4	presentation, Ms. Freeman?
5	MS. FREEMAN: Can we have five minutes?
6	JUDGE KLETTER: Yeah. We'll take a five-minute
7	break, and we'll return at 3:26. Thank you.
8	(Pause in the proceedings from 3:22 p.m.
9	until 3:27 p.m.)
LO	JUDGE KLETTER: This is Judge Kletter. We're now
11	going back on the record. It is 3:27 p.m.
L2	Ms. Freeman, you'll have 19 minutes for your closing
L3	statement and rebuttal, so please begin when you're ready.
L4	CLOSING STATEMENT
L5	MS. FREEMAN: Okay. So it's gonna be a collective
L6	response, because there were so many topics, just so you know,
L7	so everyone at this table will be providing responses.
L8	JUDGE KLETTER: Just please make sure that they are
L9	speaking directly into the microphone.
20	MS. FREEMAN: Yeah. So it's gonna be a collective
21	here since there were so many topics.
22	With respect to the job duty descriptions, we provided
23	duty descriptions for the subsequent audit period. We did
24	provide a generalized response for the audit period, which is

consistent generally with that, but again, goes to the issue

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that like in job duty statements for the state employees, that doesn't mean that was actually what was actually done. So again, I have emphasized this, in multiple audits that I have participated in, job duty statements provide broad categories of activities that are allowed or not allowed.

Here, the employees in question work in California and outside of California, and those duty statements do not explicitly say what happened in California, okay? We have acknowledged that the employees -- California employees were asked to be interviewed. We provided access to the California-based employees. David Mack was no longer with the company, which is why we had -- he -- Rodeck interviewed instead, because Greg Schweizer was not a California-based employee. He did come in a few occasions to do sales presentation, but he was not a California employee and was not asked to be interviewed. FTB seems to take issue with that.

We've also indicated, one, that job interviews themselves are more representative of the actual duties performed, but again, the FTB has taken what they have indicated on those interviews out of context. When I go in and show somebody how to use a sauce, again, I'm dealing with culinary experts. I'm not training them. I'm in there doing product demonstrations to participate in the sale. Okay?

We don't -- We don't have staff -- Again, these are employees that -- in the state that are participating in the

sales process. We don't have staff available, sufficient staff to go in and provide culinary support. All of our culinary support, again, they've confused the activities of the corporate chefs, which are in Marlborough, with the corporate activities -- the activities of what actually took place in the state, okay?

David Mack no longer worked with us, so we were relying on Keith Rodeck's best remembrance of what David was doing.

Again, the state did not ask to interview Greg Schweizer, and was aware of Greg Schweizer during the audit.

With respect to the activities performed by the chef, again, the chef in the California -- when he was in California performing sales tasks, he was part of the sales team. His menu ideation consisted of putting together samples. Wrigley permits samples to be handed out free of charge.

The fact that I had to prepare food to give to a chef, the reason you do that is you can't just hand a culinary expert a packet of sauce, rip it open and have him suck on it, and say, "What do you think?" That's just not how you're gonna make a sale. I'm sorry. That's why they did these small food presentations.

Those menu ideas, there's no evidence that anybody incorporated -- that were used in the presentation, there's no evidence those were ever used by anybody in their menus, and again, all it is, is basically showing a particular product's

versatility in an effort to make a sales call, and make a sale.

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MR. ELLIOTT: I guess I would just add that Wrigley acknowledges that conduct that implicitly invites an order is also part of solicitation, and we would say that the chef as part of the sales team was implicitly inviting the order.

MS. FREEMAN: Yeah. And there's nothing that says they had -- they could not meet with the individual customers wanting to do research to individually attempt to make a sales appointment, or make a sales call and do a presentation individually, and similarly make a sales call on their own. Even though it says they're just culinary, they are implicitly involved in communicating with the buyer to invite a sale, an actual sale in process, and these are not -- these are not activities where you have them going out to a broad range. These are customized sales visits to specific customers, and again, every visit to the customer is an opportunity to make a sale.

We did job descriptions. We did the chef. Let's go into Acosta. FTB has repeatedly said we provided no evidence of what Acosta's business activities were -- and in fact, the exhibits provided specifically detail out the activities Acosta was providing in store for the retail customers. They're telling us, again, we've given you an invoice on purpose so you can see how we're paying them, and again -- And

I'll let Marie attest to this. Their relationship with Acosta.

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With respect to the planograms, we have our own planograms. They're -- Planograms are planograms. We've had them for years. They're based on market research, and all that activity takes place in the headquarters in Marlborough.

With respect to Acosta, Acosta's headquarters, which is involved in the negotiations, isn't even in California. It's in Jacksonville, Florida, so even if they want to argue that somehow we're providing planogram services, those activities aren't happening in California.

With respect to actually putting up a -- the display case, they're doing it in the retail company's store, okay? We're allowed to have a planogram in the store. There's nothing that says, even installing -- Not that we're saying they're doing it on our behalf. There's nothing that says installing the planogram so that you have the sales display is an un-permitted activity. They acknowledge planograms are allowed.

As far as the design, all of that activity, it happened outside of California, and it was purely negotiated. If you look at the planogram example, which is in, which one? 20. Planogram's a planogram, whether it's Acosta's planogram or ours. This is our preferred, you know, product facing, but once we negotiate, you know, we get six spacings, we're gonna

go in the store periodically and make sure we got six spacings, and if we don't we're gonna go back and negotiate and make sure they put in the other two that we negotiated.

With respect to product -- trade spend, you can't tell whether they're appropriately doing their trade spend, because trade spend isn't based on the shelving, right? Trade spend is based on product sales, how many scans, how many products are sold, so they're not gonna be able to tell from looking at the planogram that's in place with our product placed. The only thing they're gonna be able to tell is whether a product is properly placed, properly priced, and in the right location where they said it was gonna be to -- to -- to basically invite orders, which is an absolutely a hundred percent permitted activity under both Wrigley and Skagen.

Retail audits. Okay. The time that it took to do a retail audit, okay? Again, they went, and we've admitted they went in seven or eight per -- per time, which was Memorial Weekend. The reason they did seven or eight, because yes, it took 45 minutes to an hour to do a sales presentation. The retail audit was merely a function of the sales person coming into the store, looking at the display case, seeing what was for sale, because every retail store is different.

Again, they have tens of thousands of retail stores.

They need to come in and see what they're dealing with. What products are selling. Is the shore -- Is the store empty --

Are the shelves empty or full. Again, he's indicated, "I don't pull product off. I don't restock shelves." They look at through -- what they have, what they're selling, and then they go back into the back room at the store, and make a sales presentation to sell product.

It's entirely ancillary, because I need to familiarize myself with what I'm dealing with, to the sales solicitation process, and it's followed-up with a sale commensurate with us telling us all the pricing, you know, promotions on these products to place the order for that customer.

MR. ELLIOTT: And I would just highlight, Exhibit 10, the sample form, which is actually -- is from 2015, but Marie can attest that it's similar to the forms they would have used in the years in issue. You can tell from that form, along with Exhibit 20, which is the picture of the planogram, and Exhibit 19, which is a photo of a shelf stock, that the amount of time that it would take to do those retail audits is relatively minimal. Definitely less than an hour, closer to five minutes, and you can tell basically by the simple nature of that form, along with the size of a planogram section, and the photos that were provided.

MS. FREEMAN: And again, the purpose of the retail audit is to put down basically store information, so I can go back and make an informed sales presentation to the person in the back room. What I just saw in the store, versus, maybe

what I hope to add to the store and increase my sales.

With respect to the issue of product matching by the sales staff, we had one example that we found where Georgia Robbie did pick up a sample from a competitor. The competitor would have had to give you that sample, or no. The person asking for the product to be matched from a competitor would have to be a specific customer, singular, asking, "Can you make me this product?" Okay? It's absolutely ancillary to the sales solicitation process. The only person you're gonna get that product from is a customer or from a potential customer.

She then, as just merely an inquiry, would send it back to the commercial kitchen in Massachusetts and say, "Hey, this customer is interested in us making this product, and us selling this product. Can you do it?" The commercial kitchen, the corporate chefs back in Marlborough, which are the only ones that are able to do that, would go back in and determine if they could match the product, and if they could, they would send samples back to Georgia, or whoever had asked for it.

In this case, the only sample we have is Georgia, and they would go back to the customer that asked us to make the product, see if it met their specifications, and if so, make a sale. If it wasn't perfect, she'd have to ship it back and make a second inquiry, but the question was, the whole purpose

of getting a competitor's sample from a customer is to see if we could make that product for them and make a sale. End of story. We're not in there trying to expand our market, although we're trying to make a specific sale.

With respect to the blank retail audit form, and the other documents that we've provided are merely, they've argued that we haven't provided any evidence of -- that all we're doing is paying Acosta for sales. The whole point of Exhibits 12 through 17, which were not requested by the auditor, is to show and provide evidence, and Marie has testified, "This is how we pay them, and I cut the checks on these things, and I am purely paying them a percentage of the sales, a commission based on the sale." We are not paying them for anything else.

MS. JOHNSON: It was the same calculation nine years ago. We just weren't asked for it.

MS. FREEMAN: Yeah. The FTB did not ask for those calculations.

With respect to the planogram, again, Acosta did not provide any planogram services that, as a convenience to us. We already had the planograms. The store shelving was already there. The negotiations between the retail customer and -- the negotiations that occurred, actually took place in Jacksonville, Florida from Acosta's perspective, and from Massachusetts in our perspective, and once it was agreed upon, the customer, the retail customer is responsible for

finalizing the display, and buying the product, and stocking the shelves. There was also an e-mail in Exhibit 11 from Mark Holbrook.

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JUDGE KLETTER: Ms. Freeman, I just want to let you know you have five minutes left in your presentation.

MS. FREEMAN: Yeah. So Exhibit 11 we provided because their assertion that Acosta is providing these services for us, confirms that we actually have the planograms, we designed the planograms, and again, it just comes down to negotiating product placement with the customer.

With respect to, again, 12 through 17, it just shows us how we're paying as evidence that we're only paying them for a percentage of sales. We provided some -- from a point of reference so you can see what we're talking about, which they've also done. We've provided you some product photos just so you can see it's a bottle of dressing, there's various sizes, there's gallons, and the planogram shows the products sitting on the shelves, consistent with the issue of what is a planogram and proper placement.

All of these -- All of this evidence is relevant to provide perspective, which is what is lacking from the FTB's analysis in this case, and it may not be contemporaneous, but nothing has changed, Marie, right? Everything is identical to what it was during the audit period with respect to the photos provided. Even though they're current, that's essentially the

same thing.

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We've also provided sample distributor invoices, even though they are not at issue, so you can see how the distributors are paid, which is consistent with what we've told you.

MR. ELLIOTT: They also cited the Brown case, and tried to compare the chefs -- The Brown Retail Group case, and tried to compare the chef's activities to the activities of the non-sales category employees in that case, and in our case, I would say the chef is part of the sales team, and the activities that in Brown they were conducting were by non-sales connected employees, and they were relatively substantial compared to trying to demonstrate products and solicit products.

In that case they did financial analysis to determine feasibility and potential for new business, site selection, lease negotiations, store design, training of office personal, provision of bookkeeping services, and inventory management and control, so way more extensive than a chef that's part of a sales team.

MS. FREEMAN: Right. And we're not performing any of those services. We're selling tangible property in this state.

With respect to the chefs, the FTB is confusing, regardless of whether it's because Keith Rodeck confused the

write-up with respect to David Mack, but the corporate chef's activities in California are significantly different than the corporate activities of the corporate chefs in Marlborough, and many of the activities that they cited to, what were they? Are not activities performed?

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MS. JOHNSON: The new formulas or new ways of using it. That -- I would say that's more of a Marlborough, Massachusetts corporate chef activity.

MS. FREEMAN: And with respect to, like, the exhibit they provided with the various, you take this dressing and you can make these dips. Those are recipes that are actually offered on the website at headquarters. They're not going out to a corporate chef and saying, "Oh, you can make this dip if you take this dressing and do this." Those recipes already exist and are on the website.

That's not the function of a corporate chef on the sales team. They are taking a specific dressing, they're not reformulating it. They're taking that dressing, whether it's to match their flavor profile, or to showcase a new dressing, they're taking that to basically showcase the product themselves. They are not reformulating anything as a member of the sales team.

So again, I think it's important to point that out they're confusing the activities. You have to have a commercial kitchen in California to perform any R&D services.

They don't have a commercial kitchen in California. They have to do product matching to do product modifications to do -- to take a competitor's sauce in order to make a sale at the request of a specific customer. You have to take it, it has to be sent to Marlborough, and they handle all that. All we are is handling the inquiries, which is a permitted activity.

It's just handing things off, going back to the customer saying, "Is this good enough? Will you make a sale?" Or if they want changes, you know, just resending it back and saying, "They want this kind of modification." Getting the product back. We're just facilitating inquiries, and in -- when all is said and done, asking for a sale. A specific sale for a specific customer. This is not marketing. This is not broader application. Any of those such activities, including data collection, is handled in Massachusetts, because you can't do it here.

JUDGE KLETTER: Ms. Freeman, does not conclude your presentation?

MS. FREEMAN: Anything else? I think for now, unless you have questions?

JUDGE KLETTER: Okay. That is your time, so let me go ahead and turn it over to my panel again. Judge Leung, do you have any questions for either party?

JUDGE LEUNG: I have questions for both sides. I will start with the Appellants, and my question for the

Appellants concern the -- the sales team chef and Acosta. So we'll start with the sales team chef. I guess, Mr. Mack and Schweizer, and I want to get more into this menu ideation activity that they do, and so let me start by saying, suppose I own a restaurant in town called River City Baby Backs, and I've got a menu item call Sacramento Rib Salad, and your sales team chef looks at that menu item, and then what? What does he do with that?

MS. FREEMAN: So my understanding of the chef's options is to go look at your menu, see what you're selling, see what your flavor profile is to see if there's any sauces, dresses, or marinades that you might be interested in purchasing related to your food service business.

JUDGE LEUNG: Does he actually taste my current menu item before he makes a suggestion? Does he taste all the menu items on my restaurant, or how does he go about doing that?

MS. FREEMAN: He does research.

JUDGE LEUNG: Mm-hmm.

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MS. FREEMAN: I'm not saying it's out of the realm of possibility that he could taste your food, but we have no implicit knowledge since that question was not asked during the course of the audit, but they would do the research about the business, what they were selling, you know, the types of foods they were selling to see if they can find, because again, the whole goal is to sell my sauces, marinades and

dressing to you, and by the way, Baby Ray's is awesome. That is one of their leading sellers, to see maybe if you wanted any Baby Ray's dressing or some modified version of that into your menu, and again, Baby Ray's they have, I don't know, how many different versions of that do they have? A lot.

MS. JOHNSON: 9 to 12.

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MS. FREEMAN: Yeah. There's a lot of different version, and again, no restaurant wants the same flavor profile as another restaurant, so invariably it's not uncommon to say, "I like this, but why don't you do this to it to make it unique to me?" Which is when we get into us facilitating or an inquiry into Marlborough to see if they could tweak it the way you want it, so it's quite possible they could taste the food as part of their background research on you, but I don't know that for sure.

JUDGE LEUNG: So part of background research would be either Schweizer or Mack need to know the market in California to see what other people are serving?

MS. FREEMAN: No. They need to know what you're doing, so they can determine what you want. There's no need for market research globally. Their goal is to sell to you. What do you want. They want to meet your needs. They don't want to waste your time in a sales presentation. They want to come to you with some options.

Not saying you're gonna like them. I hope you do, but if

you don't like them, they're saying, "Well, what can we do to make you like it?" Here's some ways you can use it. Here's how it tastes, and if you don't like it exactly, you know, like I said, we have the 885 formulas. Can we go back to Marlborough and say, "We have those 885 formulas. Is there something closer to what you're looking for?"

Then they would send -- provide samples back to see if you could taste test those and see if they're closer, and if you can't find something that's an exact match, then they would take, and with discussions with you to see what you're looking for. Go back to Marlborough and say, "Can you tweak it this way?" To customize it to get to what you want, and then have it brought back so you can taste to see if it's what you want.

Again, maybe we never get to exactly what you want, and you say, "No," but the goal is to get a product, whether it's off the shelf in our 885 formulas, or something slightly tweaked that's unique to you to get something to you to you that you'll buy to close the dale on the sale to you.

JUDGE LEUNG: Let's turn to Acosta. I hear what you're saying about the planogram. That you at Ken and Acosta negotiate what kind of planogram should be used at a retail facility, and oftentimes negotiations are done outside of California, so the implementation of that planogram, that's wholly on Acosta or the retail outlet?

MS. FREEMAN: The retail outlet, it's their shelf space. It's their real estate, okay? All we're negotiating for is how much of that self we get. Once the negotiation's done -- Most of the time, the shelf space is already there, okay? You're only gonna have an issue with putting up shelving if it's a new store, and it's quite possible by the time we get there the shelves are already up, right?

The retailer can put the shelving up themselves, or they can pay Acosta to, but we don't pay Acosta to do that. Most of the time, the shelving's already there --

JUDGE LEUNG: Right, but --

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MS. FREEMAN: -- but we would not pay them to do that. The retail outlet has already agreed to have shelving space to put in our facings.

JUDGE LEUNG: Right, but --

MS. FREEMAN: -- Marie has a comment.

MS. JOHNSON: If the facings are being changed, it's the retail outlet's responsibility to have all those facings changed. They may do it on their own, or they could hire a third party to come in and redo all their shelving, you know? Say everything has to move down two bottles, or move up, but Ken's isn't -- Ken's does not participate in that. We wouldn't ask a third party to do it for a retail outlet.

JUDGE LEUNG: Can Ken's participate in locating the shelving space? Like, they want it closer to the meat

section? Closer to, you know, the deli section, as opposed to being close to the -- and soaps.

MS. JOHNSON: Well, the planogram is really, Walmart has decided that this aisle is for condiments, and so we really can only work within that aisle, but we might say that, "We currently have 10 facings. We want to expand it to 12." And that's the negotiation. Whether or not they'll give us more space -- sorry -- more space in that aisle, but we don't really have any say how the grocery stores really set up their entire store. Does that make sense?

JUDGE LEUNG: Well, every retail, every business is different, so retail --

MS. JOHNSON: -- Usually in chains, but a Walmart, for instance, probably has almost exactly the same layout for that type of store.

THE COURT: Mm-hmm, and the actual stocking of the merchandise is done by either the store or by some distributor not related to Acosta?

MS. JOHNSON: Not related to Ken's. I don't know if Acosta is doing it for them or not, but it's not related to Ken's.

MS. FREEMAN: From my experience, for example, in local stores, when I go in there and they're stocking, often it's their own employees. There is other times I go in and see, you know, Pepsi stocking the aisles, okay? But again,

we're -- we don't -- by the time it's acquired, we don't own it, so it's not a Ken's Food employee stocking aisles. It's gonna be either the retailer's employees, which I've seen, or it's gonna be somebody they've have hired to do it on their behalf. Whether it's Acosta or somebody else, we don't know, but we don't pay for it, and we don't do it.

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JUDGE LEUNG: Thank you. For Franchise Tax Board, you've read into the record a pretty narrow definition of what PL 86-272 allows, and only restricted to solicitation, and I'm wondering, would sales into the state violate 86-272?

MR. IVANUSICH: Are you referring to direct sales?

JUDGE LEUNG: Correct.

MR. IVANUSICH: Yeah. It would. That's one of the things that Wrigley says destroys PL 86-272 protection. Also the recent case from Oregon is Santa Fe Natural Tobacco case, where they said the fact that the distributors in that case were contractually obligated to accept the orders, that that converted the salesmen's activities into facilitating sales, rather than facilitating requests for orders.

JUDGE LEUNG: So how would that apply here? I imagine Ken's has a sales factory in California, which means it has sales in California?

MS. FREEMAN: What was it?

JUDGE LEUNG: How would that, what the FTB just said, apply here? 'Cause it's clear that Ken's has sales in

California.

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MR. ELLIOTT: Well, he's citing to that Santa Fe case, and we've already addressed that in the prehearing conference. We don't have the same contractual range that they had in that case. Those were called pre-booked sales, and there were certain incentives for them to comply with those requests to fulfill those orders. We don't have the same contract as in that case.

JUDGE LEUNG: FTB, do you agree with that?

MR. IVANUSICH: Well, we don't have a contract with Acosta, so we don't exactly know what work they performed, and whether they're contractually obligated to accept orders or if they even do that for Ken's, but as far as the evidence goes for their retail or for their food service, it appears that they use distributors. I'm not aware of any contracts with those distributors that would have required them to fulfill those orders.

JUDGE LEUNG: Okay. And my final question would be for FTB. Would it make any difference at all if the activities were done by an independent contractor or an agent of the taxpayer?

MR. IVANUSICH: So if Acosta was an agent, rather than independent contractor? I mean, Acosta had offices in California. The regional manager's interview states that they have, I think, three, maybe. If Acosta was an agent, it would

be treated as an employee, and those offices would destroy protection, but we don't have any evidence stating that Acosta only performed activities for Appellant, such that it would be an agent under PL 86-272. I don't think it's in dispute that they're an independent contractor.

JUDGE LEUNG: Thank you. Judge Kletter?

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JUDGE KLETTER: Yes. Thank you, Judge Leung. I'd like to now turn it to over to Judge Johnson. Do you have any questions for the parties?

JUDGE JOHNSON: Thank you. I think I have a few. Going to Exhibit 10, the retail audit that we talked about quite a bit. Looking at that, I'm not exactly sure what happens with this. I know it was mentioned at some point it goes away. So is this the form that gets printed out, and they take that into the store, and then they fill it out as part of the audit.

MS. FREEMAN: So as part of going into making a sales presentation, they take a retail audit form with them, so that they can go to where their product facings are and take down notes, you know, what are they selling. Because again, every retail store is different, they're only going to seven or eight during the retail audits in question. There's two of them, so that makes, what, 14 or 16 visits, because it takes about an hour, 45 minutes to an hour, plus you have to go to the next spot, the next customer, so they go in and use the

retail audits, which is basically equivalent to reviewing the -- the planogram that you see in Skagen.

They're allowed to do that, but the whole point of them reviewing it is so that they have an idea of what that particular customer is selling, right? You know, how many product facings they have? Where they are? So when they go back, they can go talk to the, you know, the buyer in the store, and discuss, you know, what they're doing, what they're selling, and try to make a sale for more products consistent with the promotional program that they're doing for Memorial Weekend kickoff summer sales for barbecue.

JUDGE JOHNSON: Okay. So on this form itself would they go through and say, "Okay. There should be, you know, thirty products here from Ken's Foods. We're gonna go through and we're gonna count how many are actually on the shelf currently." Is that why it says --

MS. FREEMAN: -- They're just reviewing it to see what they have. They may count them, you know? But the whole point of it is to see what their product mix is, you know, size, content, placement, to see whether they can make additional sales, and maybe offer up, you know, maybe a special on Baby Ray's. Let's get more Baby Ray's on the shelf, so the whole point is part of the sales process. These are their notes for that particular sales to that particular customer, and when they're done, they throw them away, because

they're done.

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They don't need to keep them, and their goal was to solicit placing an order from that customer that day, for that event, and then they'll throw them away and go to the next guy. Fill out another one. What am I looking at? What do I have in the store? Where's this placement? Things like that. They need to know what the customer is doing in order to make an informed sales presentation. That's the whole purpose of the retail audit, and again, we are allowed under Skagen to go in and review the planograms to see, you know, what they got going on, and see, you know, the proper placement of its product. That's what Skagen says.

JUDGE JOHNSON: Thank you. And as for soliciting sales, this would only be for repeat customers at this point, right? You wouldn't go without a sheet for a --

MS. FREEMAN: -- Probably not. I don't see why you would. This would be, you go back into an existing customer, and you would do something formal. You're already in the store. That's why you have an audit sheet.

JUDGE JOHNSON: And in addition to just seeing what's selling, maybe what should offer them, and try to up-sell them on, or sell new products to them. Is there other functions as well? Are they making sure products are where they're supposed to be according to the planogram? Are they making sure that any displays that are supposed to be up are actually

up?

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MS. FREEMAN: Yeah. I mean, consistent with the Skagen decision, I'm allowed to go in and see if the planogram is where they said it was, and displaying the products they said it was gonna in the proper placement. That's what Skagen I can go in and review the planogram to see if it's, you know, properly explaining my products, because the whole point of a planogram and the placement of product is to invite a sale. I have advertised the price. The whole point of advertising is to invite a sale, and I wanna -- and I'm going in there to review it to make sure I'm inviting sales consistent with the agreement with the customer, but it's more importantly I wanna see what they are selling so I can go sell more.

JUDGE JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you. Different topic now.

I know we talked about Judge Leung's questions there on the market research if you're looking at just that restaurant you're working with, or looking in the general area of competitors, etc. You mentioned just looking at that restaurant, so I noticed reference in the documents to Mintel, M-I-N-T-E-L, and Technomic, T-E-C-H-N-O-M-I-C, and those looked like they were, I couldn't tell the difference, but they looked like market research companies perhaps, but the chefs were instructed to use those services?

MS. FREEMAN: We haven't discussed that with the FTB, and my understanding is there were suggestions that they learn it, because obviously they didn't learn it, and weren't using it, so my -- I have -- There's no reference whatsoever in any of the information we have on them using those services other than a suggestion by their supervisor that may could --

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JUDGE JOHNSON: Okay. I'll just ask FTB if there's anything you wanted to add on Mintel, Technomic or other market research?

MR. IVANUSICH: Mintel and Technomic were both referenced in the performance evaluations provided for the employees. It looks like that was Exhibit I. Am I allowed to speak on other questions that were asked too?

JUDGE JOHNSON: If you had some comments you would like to say, yeah.

MR. IVANUSICH: Yeah. So with the retail audits, we keep talking about that this was done for, like, a sales presentation that followed, as far as I can tell, there's nothing really in evidence that says that. Just reading from Exhibit F, the interview with the regional manager regarding the retail audits states that retail audits take about one hour. These are done in conjunction with broker visits, and a broker will check store shelving, displays, and pricing, make sure all authorized items are on the shelf, and then in the clarification, it says that the retail audits performed solely

to determine that the stores are in compliance with the agreed-upon deals that are funded in order to increase sales. I don't see anything related to a sales presentation that followed.

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No reference to just familiarizing themselves with that for the sales presentation. It seems like based on these responses that they were compliance activities, and I think that's all I have.

JUDGE JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you. Going back to Appellant, is there anything you wanted to add to that?

MS. JOHNSON: Well, I think some of retail audits, if they had gone through and looked at the facings and noticed that five different flavors were just empty and shouldn't have been, then that would be a discussion, and would follow-up with an additional order in order to fill the empty facings according to the planogram that was supposed to be filled.

JUDGE JOHNSON: Thank you. There was a topic about that was discussed about training, training to use the product. You don't need to. Maybe they should because of some of the recipes you could have.

I wanted to turn to Exhibit A, Page 2. This is the key product information, Item 6. There was the mention there that -- Let's see. David, the chef, would showed Ken's salespeople all the various uses, but ultimately the customer would be shown the various uses for the sauces as well. Is this the

sort of training provided? Not trying to insinuate that there's no training at all for your salespeople. I mean, that would be kind of reckless to just send them out and hope they do a good job, but what is this level of training? What kind of training was this that was being done?

MS. JOHNSON: Most of this training would have happened in Massachusetts in our large culinary kitchen, and the chefs really would show the salespeople to put it in burgers, to put it in pizzas, to put it in salads, those types of things, so at least when the sales team had to go talk to customers on their own without a chef, they would have some type of intimate knowledge on how to use the sauces. It wasn't training how to cook, and make a full meal, and recipe. It was really just showing how to use the sauces to the sales team.

MS. FREEMAN: And those trainings did occur outside of California?

MS. JOHNSON: Yeah. It had to have been in our culinary kitchen, yeah.

JUDGE JOHNSON: And then the sales individuals would take that information, and they would provide services to the customers in California that kind of mirrored that training?

MS. JOHNSON: Right.

MS. FREEMAN: Well, as part of the sales presentation by the chefs, because the whole point of this is to sell

sauces. They -- They did show, during a production presentation where they're providing samples, the variety of uses on a burger, or on a salad, or on whatever, but it was part of a specific sales presentation. They just didn't go into somebody's, you know, kitchen or restaurant and say, "Hey, let me show you how to do something." Every one of these opportunities to display a product was part of a sales presentation.

MR. ELLIOTT: And I think calling it training is just a mischaracterization. It's, you know, what can this product that we're trying to sell you be used for so that you purchase this product.

The cases that talk about training, Skagen, where they taught them how to use the watches, so they didn't have to produce the product manuals. The Schwinn case, the State Board of Equalization case that did training to the dealers, those are all technical in nature. This is not training. It's, buy this product. You can use it on your different products.

MS. FREEMAN: And with respect to the exhibit showing you can take, you know, Ranch dressing and convert it into a dip, those are all on the corporate website, and those recipes are developed in Marlborough, and available to anybody if they want them. We are not going into somebody's kitchen, restaurant kitchen, and saying, "Here, let us make a dip.

Let's show you how to make a dip."

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It's already on there. These people already know how to cook. They're culinary experts. The recipes are provided to the general public on the website, and we're not doing formulation as suggested. They're taking specific products out to demo them, whether it's new product or something that matches the profile, and saying, "Here's how you can use this particular product. It seems consistent with your flavor profile, you know, buy some."

JUDGE JOHNSON: Okay. And going off that, I guess, two ways, let's go with this, that activity, the showing sales people how to use it, that would happen in Massachusetts? I know the exhibit we're looking at says that David would perform this, but would David go to Massachusetts ever, or was that different chefs in Massachusetts doing that, and that's just kind of a misstatement?

MS. JOHNSON: At the time, David probably came to Massachusetts. I can't remember if we had a Massachusetts-based chef at the time, but Massachusetts was the only location at the time to have a culinary kitchen.

JUDGE JOHNSON: Okay. And going with what happens inside versus outside of California, the national account manager, I believe, were the ones that had quarterly meetings; is that correct? With -- with --

MS. FREEMAN: -- With some of the -- With some

customers.

2.

MS. JOHNSON: With some customers.

JUDGE JOHNSON: Some customers?

MS. FREEMAN: Just remember, they're -- these -- these -- all of the employees, including Greg Schweizer, California was part of their region, west region, probably, you know, half the United States. I mean, it's very clear in the record, that they weren't exclusively California, so the activities that happened within and without the state could vary between the states depending on the needs of the customer in the particular state, but here, they'd perform -- they would perform quarterly meetings with some customers in the state, but they were also performing quarterly meetings with other customers.

But the whole -- the whole goal is you have to stay in contact with the customers. You have to maintain your relationships, but any visit -- We accept any visit to get in front of a customer, because it's an opportunity to make a sale, so just checking-in was ancillary to -- The customer knows why you're there. They want you -- They know you -- you're there to sell them something. They absolutely -- I mean, that's absolutely a given.

JUDGE JOHNSON: Right. That was probably a simpler question then it ended up to be, but as far as those meetings and any kind of check-ins, the preference would probably be to

1 be in person, but with limited resources and individuals, were 2. any of these done by telephone or other remote means, or are 3 there --4 MS. JOHNSON: -- 2012, 2013, probably not. 5 JUDGE JOHNSON: Not even by phone? 6 MS. JOHNSON: They might have made phone calls. But we don't know for sure. Could 7 MS. FREEMAN: 8 have. MS. JOHNSON: 9 10 years ago. It was very different 10 from now. 11 JUDGE JOHNSON: Right. So it would probably assume 12 that at least most of them were done in person, in state for 13 the California --MS. FREEMAN: -- For the California customers. 14 15 Again, they -- they -- they -- they're servicing the whole 16 west coast. 17 Two more questions. JUDGE JOHNSON: Sure. Thank 18 you. 19 We mentioned talk about the chefs performing certain 20 solicitation sales activities at the locations of the 21 customers. We mentioned them being there with the sales pitch 22 as part of the sales pitch. We mentioned that they would --23 You guys mentioned that they would go sometimes before the 2.4 sales pitch so that they can get an idea of what the 25 restaurant is like. What they're using, so they have a better

idea of what to prepare when they show up, and could we give just sort of an overall list of the various things they would do before a sale, during the sale, and after the sale with a customer?

2.

MS. FREEMAN: We don't really have it broken down.

We know they meet -- they can meet with the customer. They can review their menu. Before the actual sales presentation, they have to go shopping for the product to actually prepare at -- They can meet with the customer to get an idea of what they were looking for, or where they were going, but again, the whole point of the process with the corporate chef, who is part of the sales team, he can even try to pitch it himself ahead of time. Who knows.

I mean, there's no -- nothing prohibiting every single opportunity to meet with a customer is an opportunity to make a sale. They could have tried to make the sale themselves. They could have demoed, you know, something ahead of time as well, and then followed-up with a follow-up presentation, but the corporate chef, again, isn't exclusive to California, and isn't necessarily taken on every single sales presentation.

Taken on some, but they have to balance the use in other states, and in the time that's spent for research, and when they have a particular customer that they want to do the sample presentation, then they bring them in, have them do sufficient research so he can do a targeted sales

presentation. That's the whole point of these activities.

JUDGE JOHNSON: Thank you. The last question for Ms. Johnson. On Exhibit B, you provided some information. I believe it was information described by the departments regarding the duties for the various sales team members. I guess just going to the general for the individuals that we've been talking about for activities, the chefs, David, and Greg, during the years at issue, did you have any personal knowledge of the kind of activities they were performing in California, or any personal knowledge about the statements on Exhibit B, or is that sort of information you provided for us?

MS. JOHNSON: At the time, this was information that we collected from conversations with them, because originally we weren't asked for actual job descriptions. We were just asked for a list of duties, so we reached out to the sales teams, to the chefs, we created the list of duties, and then later on, I think in 2017, the FTB asked us for actual job descriptions.

MS. FREEMAN: The duty statement.

MS. JOHNSON: The duty statements, yeah.

JUDGE JOHNSON: I guess everything -- FTB, was there anything you wanted to add on those topics I covered?

MR. IVANUSICH: No. Not much. Just again, saying that the trainings occurred in Massachusetts, I don't see anything in the record that indicates that. Like you

1 mentioned, this was David. This was a corporate chef that was 2. based in California. Other than that, I don't have anything 3 else to add. 4 JUDGE JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you. Done with 5 questions. Thank you. JUDGE KLETTER: And this is Judge Kletter. Thank 6 7 you, Judge Johnson. I have a few questions. They are more in the nature of confirmations so just quick yes, no questions. 8 9 So with respect to the corporate, and these are questions 10 primarily for Appellant, but I will indicate, and, you know, FTB, if you have any comment after, I'll turn to you, but, the 11 corporate chef, I just wanted to confirm is it Appellant's 12 13 position that the practical job function of David Mack and 14 Greg Schweizer were substantially similar? 15 MS. JOHNSON: Yes. 16 MS. FREEMAN: Yeah. And again, they are not 17 full-time in California. 18 JUDGE KLETTER: Yeah. Just asking if they're 19 substantially similar? Okay. Great. Thank you. 20 Next question is, so the corporate chef, that was -- So 21 Ken's has, sells product for retail sale and also for 22 commercial food service, so the corporate chef was for food 23 service only?

MS. FREEMAN: Correct. There's no need for a chef

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related to retail sales.

1	JUDGE KLETTER: Great. And the two senior national
2	chain account managers, those were food service only?
3	MS. JOHNSON: Yes.
4	JUDGE KLETTER: And together, those two employee
5	categories, made up the sales team for food service?
6	MS. JOHNSON: In California, yes.
7	JUDGE KLETTER: Thank you. And the retail regional
8	managers, those were for retail only?
9	MS. JOHNSON: Yes.
10	JUDGE KLETTER: And for these three categories of
11	employees, how were they compensated?
12	MS. JOHNSON: Salary, plus bonus based on volume.
13	JUDGE KLETTER: And for the Sorry. I'm just
14	looking here. So you mentioned that for retail customers that
15	they would generally place their orders through the EDI, and
16	in very limited circumstances, maybe when they were a smaller
17	retailer or didn't have access, then they would place those
18	orders through Acosta, the broker.
19	I just wanted to confirm for food service, you mentioned
20	that they usually worked with a distributor like Sysco. I
21	forget what the other one was. Is that how they would place
22	their orders, or they would also place the orders through the
23	EDI.
24	MS. JOHNSON: Well, EDI would come directly from
25	those distributors, so US Foods Service, Sysco would send an

1 order via EDI directly to Ken's. 2. JUDGE KLETTER: Okay. Thank you. Now, Ms. Johnson, 3 I just have a question. I know you just answered that, a 4 question about this, but just relatedly, so for those Exhibits 10 through 23, you know, there were a couple questions on 5 rebuttal that came up that I didn't get clear answers from 6 7 you, so are you or were you responsible for preparing those Exhibits 10 through 23 for the audits -- audit years at issue? 8 MS. JOHNSON: 9 I -- Audit years at issue. So I think 10 10 came out during the audit period, but 11 through 17 were 11 just presented now. 12 Yeah. I quess, I just mean, like, JUDGE KLETTER: 13 was it part of your job duties --14 MS. JOHNSON: -- I don't create them. I would pay 15 them. We have a food service administrative team in 16 Marlborough that would actually run the reports, generate the 17 reports, submit them to me, and I'd approve them for payment. 18 JUDGE KLETTER: So you are familiar with these forms, 19 or you were --20 MS. JOHNSON: -- Yes. JUDGE KLETTER: -- familiar with these forms --21 22 MS. JOHNSON: -- Yes. 23 JUDGE KLETTER: -- during the audit period? 2.4 MS. JOHNSON: Yes. 25 JUDGE KLETTER: Okay. And then I know that one of

the representatives asked you, but are you, like, with a verbal, "yes," are you attesting that Exhibit 10 is representative of the forms for the audit period at issue?

MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

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JUDGE KLETTER: Okay. And then also, you were asked that for those Exhibits 10 through 23, that everything is identical to the audit period at issue?

MS. JOHNSON: Yes. Same format, uh-huh.

JUDGE KLETTER: Okay. Okay. And then I just have -- just one or two more questions from the presentation.

So, Ms. Freeman, you mentioned that when conducting the pre-sales research, those corporate chefs would meet with the food service, commercial food service, I guess, companies or chefs, and they would discuss the menu, the flavor profile, and then you said, "And what they got," so I'm wondering, like, what that refers to?

MS. FREEMAN: Well, they don't -- I'm not sure I mean either, but the -- They didn't always meet ahead of time. They could. At times, they did, but they basically were there to gather background information for the sales presentation, which included, you know, what are they selling, you know, and they're looking to change anything, or, you know, things like that on their menu, the question is what flavor profile were they gonna be going with so that we could make sure we brought the right product to the presentation, so --

Oh. And is there anything in particular they're looking for? Like, are they looking for a particular type of sauce, so that we could bring it with us, right? The whole point of these pre-sales meetings when they did happen was to get an idea of what they want so that I can bring samples, appropriate samples, with me of our, you know, 885 formulas to do a presentation to hopefully get -- sell something to them that they're actually looking for.

Like I said before, I don't want to take Ranch dressing if they want Marinara sauce. There's no point to that, so you just get a feel for what the client was -- so we can target and -- So I can make a targeted sales presentation.

JUDGE KLETTER: My last question is, you know, in another part of the presentation you were talking about that the sales team doesn't get data from the EDI system, or doesn't track that market data. That's something that headquarters may provide the sales team information of, but right after that, you said that the sales team reviews market and competitor data. What did you mean by that?

MS. FREEMAN: What I said was all of the data is collected and mined in Marlborough, Massachusetts. All the marketing, all of that type of activity would happen at headquarters. If there was data that would be useful to do more targeted sales effort by the respective retail manager, they would push that out, discuss it with them, so that they

1	could perhaps augment their existing, you know, sales efforts
2	to more target the specific customer's needs, so that
3	particular customer is selling, you know, pomegranate
4	dressing, and it's not selling, they need to convey to the
5	retail manager, "It's not selling, so sell this instead and
6	stop selling that one, because it's not selling."
7	JUDGE KLETTER: Okay. And my last question. Just
8	now it was mentioned that the sales team, they were paid
9	salary, and they were also reimbursed based on the volume of
10	sale. How is that volume of sales determined? Was that
11	MS. JOHNSON: Well, they got bonuses based on
12	JUDGE KLETTER: I'm sorry. Bonuses based on the
13	volume of sales. How was that determined what their volume of
14	sales was?
15	MS. JOHNSON: It would just be total sales to
16	whatever region they were responsible for, and so each year a
17	target was set. Could be based on last year's, plus three
18	percent or five percent, and if they hit that dollar volume
19	for retail, or pounds for volume for food service, they would
20	get their bonus.
21	JUDGE KLETTER: So when you say total sales, you mean
22	sales, like, distributor sales
23	MS. JOHNSON: food service distributor sales, and
24	for retail, it would be sales to grocery stores, for instance.
25	JUDGE KLETTER: Okay. Great. Thank you. I do not

1	have any more questions, but I did want to just ask FTB, do
2	you have any response or any comment on my topic that of
3	questions? Just quickly?
4	MR. IVANUSICH: No. Not that I can think of.
5	JUDGE KLETTER: Okay. Thank you. And I just want to
6	ask my panel one last time if there are any questions in case
7	something has come up.
8	Judge Leung, did you have any further question?
9	JUDGE LEUNG: No further questions. Thank you.
10	JUDGE KLETTER: And, Judge Johnson, do you have any
11	further questions?
12	JUDGE JOHNSON: No further questions, just thank you
13	for your time and testimony today.
14	JUDGE KLETTER: Yeah. So I really appreciate
15	everyone's time. This concludes the hearing. The panel will
16	meet and decide this case based on the documentation in the
17	record, and also the testimony provided.
18	We will issue our written decision no later than a
19	hundred days from today. The case is submitted, and the
20	record is now closed, and this concludes this hearing session.
21	Thanks so much, everyone.
22	(Whereupon the proceedings were concluded.)
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2	
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11	was thereafter transcribed under my direction; that the
12	foregoing transcript is a true record of the testimony
13	given.
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