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More than 1,100 New Jersey gas station attendants receive \$5.5 million in back wages and damages in US Labor Department enforcement initiative

Wage and Hour violations found at Shell, Exxon, BP and other national brand gas stations

MOUNTAINSIDE, N.J. -- In the past five years, more than 1,100 attendants at Shell, Exxon, BP and other leading brand gas stations in New Jersey have been denied the minimum wage and, in some cases, overtime pay. These workers have received \$5.5 million in back wages and damages recovered thanks to a multiyear enforcement initiative conducted by the US Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division.

"The wages recovered for these low-wage workers will help them pay rent and put food on the table for their families. These wages will also fuel the local economy," said Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez. "The U.S. Labor Department is determined to ensure that employers follow the law and to create a level playing field for those competitors who pay their workers all of the wages they have rightfully earned."

"Our investigations of the New Jersey gas station industry found widespread violations of the federal [Fair Labor Standards Act](#)'s minimum wage, overtime and record-keeping provisions" said Mark Watson, regional administrator of the Wage and Hour Division in the Northeast. "To combat these violations, we are engaged in strategic enforcement and outreach efforts with employer organizations and employee advocacy groups to educate all parties on their rights and responsibilities. Our efforts are having an impact on the industry."

In fiscal year 2014, the division recovered nearly \$300,000 in back wages and damages for nearly 100 employees, about \$3,000 per worker. While that amount is significant, it has dropped to its lowest point since the initiative began in 2010. In addition, ample evidence shows the division's enforcement efforts have impacted the industry. The division's investigators report that some gas stations hired more employees to avoid overtime violations; purchased time clocks to track hours worked; and contacted the Wage and Hour Division for help in providing intensive training for managers on overtime and minimum wage laws. The division will continue to monitor this industry for continued compliance in fiscal year 2015.

The FLSA requires that covered employees be paid at least the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour. Nonagricultural and other nonexempt employees are entitled to time and one-half their regular rates for every hour they work beyond 40 per week. The law also requires employers to maintain accurate records of employees' wages, hours and other conditions of employment, and prohibits employers from retaliating against employees who exercise their rights under the law. The FLSA provides that employers who violate the law are, as a general rule, liable to employees for back wages and an equal amount in liquidated damages.

When employees are denied their hard-earned income, the Wage and Hour Division is committed to ensuring that workers receive wages earned and needed for basic expenses such as rent, transportation and food. Since 2009, the division's investigations have resulted in the recovery of more than \$1.3 billion dollars in back wages for more than 1.5 million workers.

For more information about federal wage laws, or to [file a complaint](#), call the Wage and Hour Division's toll-free helpline at 866-4US-WAGE (487-9243), or the division's Northern New Jersey District Office, which is leading the enforcement initiative, at 908-317-8611. Information also is available at <http://www.dol.gov/whd/>.