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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 14, 2024

**TRENTON** – The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) assessed \$60,611.41 in back wages, penalties, and fees to VLD Landscaping L.L.C. of New Brunswick after the Division of Wage and Hour Compliance uncovered multiple violations of state labor laws affecting five employees.

VLD Landscaping was cited for the following violations: failing to pay overtime; record keeping violations; unpaid/late payment; Earned Sick Leave records violations; and failing to properly classify employees. The company's owner was advised of New Jersey's labor laws and provided with the [Employer's Guide to Wage and Hour Laws](#).

An audit conducted for overtime pay owed amounted to \$28,927.50. As the employees were paid in cash with no deductions, a five percent misclassification penalty was assessed at \$9,128.33. Another \$22,555.58 was assessed to VLD Landscaping in penalties and administrative fees.

"These violations serve as a stark reminder of why New Jersey's labor laws exist, and this department will not tolerate any dishonest actions that undermine them," said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo. "Our state continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to ensuring the fair treatment of workers, and NJDOL will hold violators accountable to the fullest extent of the law."

The investigation was prompted by a complaint filed by the advocacy group New Labor on behalf of the five VLD Landscaping workers.

NJDOL issued a subpoena requiring VLD Landscaping to appear at NJDOL headquarters in Trenton, however owner Israel Ramirez Lopez was unable to provide requested documentation. Lopez informed a Wage and Hour Compliance investigator that he paid his workers in cash and workers worked only two to three days a week.

The Wage and Hour Compliance investigator met with the five workers to obtain statements and further information.

The work performed by VLD Landscaping involved the routine mowing of grass on commercial and residential properties.

For more information on worker benefits and protections, please visit [myworkrights.nj.gov](https://myworkrights.nj.gov).

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