

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION APPEALS BOARD**  
**STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

**MARSELL WILLIS, *Applicant***

**vs.**

**TENDERLOIN HOUSING CLINIC PSI;**  
**ATHENS ADMINISTRATORS, *Defendants***

**Adjudication Numbers: ADJ20779269; ADJ20144418**  
**San Francisco District Office**

**OPINION AND ORDER**  
**DISMISSING PETITION FOR**  
**RECONSIDERATION**

Applicant, in pro per, seeks reconsideration of the Order Approving Compromise and Release (OACR) approved by the workers' compensation administrative law judge (WCJ) on April 10, 2025.

Applicant contends, in essence, that the settlement does not adequately compensate applicant for his injuries or ongoing medical treatment, and the WCJ should set aside the OACR.

We did not receive an Answer from defendant. The WCJ issued a Report and Recommendation on Petition for Reconsideration (Report) recommending that the Petition be denied.

We have considered the allegations of the Petition and the contents of the Report with respect thereto. Based on our review of the record, and as discussed below, we will dismiss the Petition as premature and return this matter to the trial level for consideration of the Petition as one to set aside the OACR.

**FACTS**

We will briefly review the relevant facts.

Applicant claimed injury to multiple body parts arising out of and in the course of employment by defendant as a custodian/janitor on December 2, 2022. Applicant also claimed injury to multiple body parts arising out of and in the course of employment by defendant in a separate incident on December 6, 2022.

Applicant and defendant entered into an agreement to settle both of applicant's workers' compensation claims by compromise and release (C&R). On January 16, 2025, applicant signed the C&R. On March 31, 2025, attorney for defendant signed the C&R. On April 10, 2025 the WCJ approved the OACR, which was served on April 14, 2025.

## DISCUSSION

### I.

Former Labor Code section 5909 provided that a petition for reconsideration was deemed denied unless the Appeals Board acted on the petition within 60 days from the date of filing. (Lab. Code, § 5909.) Effective July 2, 2024, Labor Code section 5909 was amended to state in relevant part that:

- (a) A petition for reconsideration is deemed to have been denied by the appeals board unless it is acted upon within 60 days from the date a trial judge transmits a case to the appeals board.
- (b)
  - (1) When a trial judge transmits a case to the appeals board, the trial judge shall provide notice to the parties of the case and the appeals board.
  - (2) For purposes of paragraph (1), service of the accompanying report, pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 5900, shall constitute providing notice.

Under Labor Code section 5909(a), the Appeals Board must act on a petition for reconsideration within 60 days of transmission of the case to the Appeals Board. Transmission is reflected in Events in the Electronic Adjudication Management System (EAMS). Specifically, in Case Events, under Event Description is the phrase "Sent to Recon" and under Additional Information is the phrase "The case is sent to the Recon board."

Here, according to Events, the case was transmitted to the Appeals Board on November 3, 2025, and 60 days from the date of transmission is January 2, 2026. This decision is issued by or on January 2, 2026, so that we have timely acted on the petition as required by Labor Code section 5909(a).

Labor Code section 5909(b)(1) requires that the parties and the Appeals Board be provided with notice of transmission of the case. Transmission of the case to the Appeals Board in EAMS provides notice to the Appeals Board. Thus, the requirement in subdivision (1) ensures that the

parties are notified of the accurate date for the commencement of the 60-day period for the Appeals Board to act on a petition. Labor Code section 5909(b)(2) provides that service of the Report and Recommendation shall be notice of transmission.

Here, according to the proof of service for the Report and Recommendation by the workers' compensation administrative law judge, the Report was served on November 3, 2025, and the case was transmitted to the Appeals Board on November 3, 2025. Service of the Report and transmission of the case to the Appeals Board occurred on the same day. Thus, we conclude that the parties were provided with the notice of transmission required by Labor Code section 5909(b)(1) because service of the Report in compliance with Labor Code section 5909(b)(2) provided them with actual notice as to the commencement of the 60-day period on November 3, 2025.

## II.

The Appeals Board has continuing jurisdiction to "rescind, alter, or amend any order, decision, or award," if a petition is filed within five years of the date of injury and "good cause" to reopen is shown. (Lab. Code, §§ 5803, 5804.) An OACR is an order that may be reopened for "good cause" under Labor Code section 5803. "Good cause" includes fraud, duress, undue influence, mutual mistake of fact, mistake of law, invalidity of execution, incompetency, or minority at the time of execution of the agreement. (See California Workers' Compensation Law (Cont. Ed. Bar 4th Ed.) §§ 16.61 et seq.; see also *Argonaut Ins. Exch. v. Industrial Acc. Com.* (1958) 49 Cal.2d 706 [23 Cal.Comp.Cases 34]; *Smith v. Workers' Comp. Appeals Bd.* (1985) 168 Cal.App.3d 1160 [50 Cal.Comp.Cases 311]; *Carmichael v. Industrial Acc. Com.* (1965) 234 Cal.App.2d 311 [30 Cal.Comp.Cases 169]; *Silva v. Industrial Acc. Com.* (1924) 68 Cal. App. 510 [11 IAC 266]; *City of Beverly Hills v. Workers' Comp. Appeals Bd.* (1997) 62 Cal.Comp.Cases 1691 (writ den.); *Bullocks, Inc. v. Industrial Acc. Com.* (1951) 16 Cal.Comp.Cases 253 (writ den.); *Pac. Indem. Co. v. Industrial Acc. Com.* (1946) 11 Cal.Comp.Cases 117 (writ den.).) Whether good cause exists is case specific. The circumstances surrounding the execution and approval of the agreement must be assessed. (See Lab. Code, § 5702; *Weatherall*, supra, 77 Cal.App.4th at pp. 1118-1121; *Robinson v. Workers' Comp. Appeals Bd.* (1987) 199 Cal.App.3d 784, 790-792 [52 Cal.Comp.Cases 419]; *Huston v. Workers' Comp. Appeals Bd.* (1979) 95 Cal.App.3d 856, 864-867 [44 Cal.Comp.Cases 798].)

Further, “[t]he Workers’ Compensation Appeals Board shall inquire into the adequacy of all Compromise and Release agreements and Stipulations with Request for Award, and may set the matter for hearing to take evidence when necessary to determine whether the agreement should be approved or disapproved, or issue findings and awards.” (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 8, § 10700(b).)

As part of our inquiry, we observe that contract principles apply to settlements of workers’ compensation disputes, and “[t]he legal principles governing compromise and release agreements are the same as those governing other contracts.” (*Burbank Studios v. Workers’ Co. Appeals Bd. (Yount)* (1982) 134 Cal.App.3d 929, 935 [47 Cal.Comp.Cases 832].) For a compromise and release agreement to be valid and enforceable, the elements of a contract must be satisfied, including offer of settlement and acceptance. (*Id.*)

Mutual consent of the parties is also an essential element of a contract because there can be no contract unless there is a meeting of the minds and the parties mutually agree upon the same thing in the same sense. (Civ. Code, §§ 1550, 1565, 1580; *German Sav. & Loan Soc. v. McLellan* (1908) 154 Cal. 710, 716; *Sackett v. Starr* (1949) 95 Cal.App.2d 128, 133.) “A contract must be so interpreted as to give effect to the mutual intention of the parties as it existed at the time of contracting, so far as the same is ascertainable and lawful. [Citations.]” (*County of San Joaquin v. Workers’ Compensation Appeals Bd. (Sepulveda)* (2004) 117 Cal.App.4th 1180, 1184 [69 Cal.Comp.Cases 193].)

Additionally, there must be a complete record for our review of the case. “[A] proper record enables any reviewing tribunal, be it the Board on reconsideration or a court on further appeal, to understand the basis for the decision.” (*Hamilton v. Lockheed Corporation* (2001) 66 Cal.Comp.Cases 473, 475 (Appeals Bd. en banc).) Moreover, all parties to a workers’ compensation proceeding retain their fundamental right to due process and a fair hearing under both the California and United States Constitutions. (*Rucker v. Workers’ Comp. Appeals Bd.* (2000) 82 Cal.App.4th 151, 157-158 [65 Cal.Comp.Cases 805].) A fair hearing includes, but is not limited to, the opportunity to call and cross-examine witnesses; introduce and inspect exhibits; and offer evidence in rebuttal. (*Gangwish v. Workers’ Comp. Appeals Bd.* (2001) 89 Cal.App.4th 1284, 1295 [66 Cal.Comp.Cases 584]; *Rucker*, *supra*, 82 Cal.App.4th at pp. 157-158, citing *Kaiser Co. v. Industrial Acc. Com.* (1952) 109 Cal.App.2d 54, 58 [17 Cal.Comp.Cases 21]; *Katzin v. Workers’ Comp. Appeals Bd.* (1992) 5 Cal.App.4th 703, 710-712 [57 Cal.Comp.Cases 230].)

Decisions of the Appeals Board “must be based on admitted evidence in the record” (*Hamilton, supra*, at 476), and must be supported by substantial evidence (Lab. Code, §§ 5903, 5952(d); *Lamb v. Workmen’s Comp. Appeals Bd.* (1974) 11 Cal.3d 274 [39 Cal.Comp.Cases 310]; *Garza v. Workmen’s Comp. Appeals Bd.* (1970) 3 Cal.3d 312 [35 Cal.Comp.Cases 500]; *LeVesque v. Workmen’s Comp. Appeals Bd.* (1970) 1 Cal.3d 627 [35 Cal.Comp.Cases 16]). As required by Labor Code section 5313 and explained in *Hamilton*, “the WCJ is charged with the responsibility of referring to the evidence in the opinion on decision, and of clearly designating the evidence that forms the basis of the decision.” (*Hamilton, supra*, at p. 475.)

In this case, although the WCJ provided a reasonable rationale in the Report as to why there is no basis to set aside the OACR, in the absence of a record, we are unable to evaluate whether good cause exists to set aside the OACR. Accordingly, we dismiss the Petition for Reconsideration as premature and return the matter to the WCJ for further proceedings consistent with this opinion. Upon return of this matter to the trial level, the WCJ may treat the Petition as a petition to set aside the OACR, conduct further proceedings, and create a record on which a decision can be made as to whether there are grounds for setting aside the OACR. After the WCJ issues a decision, any aggrieved party may timely seek reconsideration.

Accordingly, we dismiss the Petition for Reconsideration as premature and return the matter to the trial level for further proceedings consistent with this opinion.

For the foregoing reasons,

**IT IS ORDERED** that the Petition for Reconsideration is **DISMISSED**.

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION APPEALS BOARD**

**/s/ JOSEPH V. CAPURRO, COMMISSIONER**

**I CONCUR,**

**/s/ CRAIG L. SNELLINGS, COMMISSIONER**

**/s/ KATHERINE WILLIAMS DODD, COMMISSIONER**



**DATED AND FILED AT SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA**

**DECEMBER 23, 2025**

**SERVICE MADE ON THE ABOVE DATE ON THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW AT THEIR ADDRESSES SHOWN ON THE CURRENT OFFICIAL ADDRESS RECORD.**

**MARSELL WILLIS  
ROSENBERG YUDIN LLP**

**DC/cs**

I certify that I affixed the official seal of  
the Workers' Compensation Appeals  
Board to this original decision on this date.  
CS