

1 MARY ANN SMITH  
Deputy Commissioner  
2 SEAN M. ROONEY  
Assistant Chief Counsel  
3 SOPHIA C. KIM (State Bar No. 265649)  
Senior Counsel  
4 Department of Business Oversight  
320 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 750  
5 Los Angeles, California 90013  
Telephone: (213) 576-7594  
6 Facsimile: (213) 576-7181

7 Attorneys for Complainant

8  
9 BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS OVERSIGHT  
10 OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

11 In the Matter of: ) CFL LICENSE NOS.: 60DBO-84872;  
12 THE COMMISSIONER OF BUSINESS ) 60DBO-88266;  
OVERSIGHT, ) 60DBO-88267  
13 ) SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT  
14 Complainant, )  
15 v. )  
16 GRASS RIVER REAL ESTATE CREDIT )  
PARTNERS LOAN FUNDING, LLC, )  
17 )  
18 Respondent. )  
19 \_\_\_\_\_ )

20  
21 This Settlement Agreement is entered into between the Commissioner of Business Oversight  
22 (Complainant or Commissioner) and Grass River Real Estate Credit Partners Loan Funding, LLC  
23 (Respondent) and is made with respect to the following facts:

24 **I.**

25 **RECITALS**

26 A. The Commissioner has jurisdiction over the licensing and regulation of persons and  
27 entities engaged in the business of finance lending or brokering under the California Financing Law  
28 (CFL) (Fin. Code, § 22000 et seq.).

1 B. Respondent is a limited liability company with a principal place of business at 2977  
2 McFarlane Road, Suite 300, Miami, Florida 33133.

3 C. Respondent is licensed as a finance lender under the CFL with main license number  
4 60DBO-84872.

5 D. Respondent operates one branch office in California.

6 E. In accordance with Financial Code section 22159, CFL licensees must file an annual  
7 report with the Commissioner by March 15 of each year (Annual Report).

8 F. On January 2, 2019, the Commissioner notified CFL licensees of the March 15, 2019  
9 deadline to file their annual reports by sending notice to the email address of each CFL licensee  
10 established pursuant to the Commissioner's Order on Electronic Communications, dated November  
11 22, 2013. The notification admonished licensees that the Commissioner could assess penalties and  
12 summarily revoke CFL license(s) for untimely filing or failing to file pursuant to Financial Code  
13 section 22715.

14 G. On February 1, 2019, the Commissioner again notified CFL licensees of the March  
15 15, 2019 deadline to file their annual reports by sending notice to the email address each CFL  
16 licensee established pursuant to the Commissioner's Order on Electronic Communications, dated  
17 November 22, 2013. The notification again warned that the Commissioner could assess penalties and  
18 summarily revoke licenses for untimely filing or failing to file pursuant to Financial Code section  
19 22715.

20 H. On March 5, 2019, the Commissioner again notified CFL licensees of the March 15,  
21 2019 deadline to file their annual reports by sending notice to the email address each CFL licensee  
22 established pursuant to the Commissioner's Order on Electronic Communications, dated November  
23 22, 2013. The notification again warned that the Commissioner could assess penalties and  
24 summarily revoke licenses for untimely filing or failing to file pursuant to Financial Code section  
25 22715.

26 I. As of March 15, 2019, Respondent had not filed its Annual Report with the  
27 Commissioner. As a result, the Commissioner issued a notice on March 18, 2019 to Respondent to  
28 Respondent's email address established pursuant to the Commissioner's Order on Electronic

1 Communications, dated November 22, 2013, advising Respondent that it should file its annual report  
2 by or before March 29, 2019 or else its license would be summarily revoked pursuant to Financial  
3 Code section 22715 (Notice email).

4 J. As of March 29, 2019, Respondent had not filed its Annual Report with the  
5 Commissioner as directed in the Notice Letter. As a result, on April 3, 2019, the Commissioner  
6 issued an Order Summarily Revoking California Finance Lenders License Pursuant to Financial  
7 Code Section 22715 for CFL License Numbers 60DBO-84872; 60DBO-88266; 60DBO-88267  
8 (Summary Revocation Orders).

9 K. Upon receiving notice of the Summary Revocation Orders, Respondent notified the  
10 Commissioner that Respondent was requesting a hearing on the Summary Revocation Orders.

11 L. On September 13, 2019, Respondent submitted its Annual Report, which was due on  
12 March 15, 2019, 127 business days late. Pursuant to Financial Code section 22715, the maximum  
13 penalty that may be imposed for filing 127 business days late is \$25,000.00 (\$100 per business day  
14 for the first five business days and \$500 per business day thereafter up to a maximum of \$25,000).

15 M. In connection with these proceedings, Respondent represented to the Commissioner  
16 that it had taken no new applications under its license since receiving notice of the Summary  
17 Revocation Orders.

18 N. The Commissioner finds that entering into this Settlement Agreement is in the public  
19 interest and consistent with the purposes fairly intended by the policies and provisions of the CFL.

20 NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing, and the terms and conditions set  
21 forth herein, the parties agree as follows:

22 **II.**

23 **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

24 1. Purpose. The parties intend to resolve this matter for the purpose of judicial economy  
25 and expediency and without the uncertainty and expense of a hearing or other litigation.

26 2. Waiver of Hearing Rights. Respondent hereby agrees to withdraw its request for an  
27 administrative hearing on the Summary Revocation Orders. Respondent acknowledges its right  
28 under the CFL to an administrative hearing on the Summary Revocation Orders and hereby waives

1 such right to a hearing and to any reconsideration, appeal, injunction or other review that may be  
2 afforded under the Financial Code; Administrative Procedure Act, including Government Code  
3 section 11415.60, subdivision (b); Code of Civil Procedure; or any other provision of law. By  
4 waiving such rights, Respondent effectively consents to the finality of the Summary Revocation  
5 Orders.

6 3. Order Rescinding Revocation Orders. The Commissioner hereby rescinds the  
7 Summary Revocation Orders, which had been issued on April 3, 2019.

8 4. Administrative Penalty. Respondent shall pay an administrative penalty of \$25,000.00  
9 no later than 30 days after the effective date of this Settlement Agreement as defined in paragraph  
10 18. The penalty must be made payable in the form of a cashier's check or Automated Clearing  
11 House deposit to the Department of Business Oversight and transmitted to the attention of  
12 Accounting – Litigation, at the Department of Business Oversight, 1515 K Street, Suite 200,  
13 Sacramento, California 95814. Notice of the payment must be concurrently sent to Sophia C. Kim,  
14 Senior Counsel, Department of Business Oversight, 320 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 750, Los Angeles,  
15 California 90013.

16 5. Failure to Pay Administrative Penalty. If Respondent fails to comply with paragraph  
17 4, the Commissioner may summarily suspend it from engaging in business under its license until it  
18 provides evidence of compliance to the Commissioner's satisfaction. Respondent hereby waives any  
19 notice or hearing rights afforded under the Administrative Procedure Act, including Government  
20 Code section 11415.60, subdivision (b); Code of Civil Procedure; or any other provision of law to  
21 contest the summary suspension contemplated by this paragraph.

22 6. Full and Final Resolution. Except as stated in paragraph 5, this Settlement  
23 Agreement is intended to constitute a full and final resolution of the matter described in it. The  
24 Commissioner will not bring any further action or proceeding concerning the matter unless he  
25 discovers violations by Respondent that do not form the basis for this Settlement Agreement,  
26 including violations knowingly concealed from the Commissioner.

27 7. Commissioner's Duties. Nothing in this Settlement Agreement limits the  
28 Commissioner's ability to assist any other government agency with any action brought by that

1 agency against Respondent, including an action based on any of the acts, omissions, or events  
2 described in this Settlement Agreement.

3 8. Independent Legal Advice. Each of the parties represents, warrants, and agrees that it  
4 has had an opportunity to seek independent advice from its attorney(s) and/or representatives with  
5 respect to the advisability of executing this Settlement Agreement.

6 9. Reliance. Each of the parties represents, warrants, and agrees that in executing this  
7 Settlement Agreement it has relied solely on the statement set forth herein and has had the  
8 opportunity to seek the legal advice of its own counsel. Each of the parties further represents,  
9 warrants, and agrees that in executing this Settlement Agreement it has placed no reliance on any  
10 statement, representation, or promise of any other party, or any other person or entity not expressly  
11 set forth herein, or upon the failure of any party or any other person or entity to make any statement,  
12 representation, or disclosure of anything whatsoever. The parties have included this clause: (1) to  
13 preclude any claim that any party was in any way fraudulently induced to execute this Settlement  
14 Agreement; and (2) to preclude the introduction of parol evidence to vary, interpret, supplement, or  
15 contradict the terms of this Settlement Agreement.

16 10. Full Integration. This Settlement Agreement is the final written expression and the  
17 complete and exclusive statement of all the agreements, conditions, promises, representations, and  
18 covenants between the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof, and supersedes all prior or  
19 contemporaneous agreements, negotiations, representations, understandings, and discussions  
20 between and among the parties, their respective representatives, and any other person or entity, with  
21 respect to the subject matter covered hereby. The parties have included this clause to preclude the  
22 introduction of parol evidence to vary, interpret, supplement, or contradict the terms of this  
23 Settlement Agreement.

24 11. No Presumption Against Drafter. In that the parties have had the opportunity to draft,  
25 review, and edit the language of this Settlement Agreement, no presumption for or against any party  
26 arising out of drafting all or any part of this Settlement Agreement will be applied in any action  
27 relating to, connected to, or involving this Settlement Agreement. Accordingly, the parties waive the  
28 benefit of Civil Code section 1654 and any successor or amended statutes, providing that in cases of

1 uncertainty, language of a contract should be interpreted most strongly against the party who caused  
2 the uncertainty to exist.

3 12. Voluntary Agreement. Respondent hereby enters in this Settlement Agreement  
4 voluntarily and without coercion and acknowledges that no promises, threats, or assurances have  
5 been made by the Commissioner or any officer, or agent thereof, about this Settlement Agreement.

6 13. Waiver, Amendments, and Modifications. No waiver, amendment, or modification of  
7 this Settlement Agreement will be valid or binding unless it is in writing and signed by all parties  
8 affected by it. Waiver of a provision of this Settlement Agreement will not be deemed a waiver of  
9 any other provision.

10 14. Counterparts. The parties agree that this Settlement Agreement may be executed in  
11 one or more separate counterparts, each of which when so executed, shall be deemed an original. A  
12 fax or electronic mail signature shall be deemed the same as an original signature. Such counterparts  
13 shall together constitute and be one and the same instrument.

14 15. Public Record. Respondent acknowledges that the Settlement Agreement is public  
15 record.

16 16. Headings. The headings to the paragraphs of this Settlement Agreement are inserted  
17 for convenience only and will not be deemed a part hereof or affect the construction or interpretation  
18 of the provisions hereof.

19 17. Governing Law. This Settlement Agreement shall be construed and enforced in  
20 accordance with and governed by California law.

21 18. Effective Date. This Settlement Agreement will become effective on the date it is  
22 signed by all parties and delivered by the Commissioner to Respondent's counsel by electronic mail  
23 at JLoeser@winston.com.

24 ///  
25 ///  
26 ///  
27 ///  
28 ///

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28

19. Settlement Authority. Each party represents that the person signing this Settlement Agreement on its behalf has the authority and capacity to do so.

Dated: 10/2/19

MANUEL P. ALVAREZ  
Commissioner of Business Oversight

By \_\_\_\_\_

MARY ANN SMITH  
Deputy Commissioner  
Enforcement Division

Dated: 10/2/19

GRASS RIVER REAL ESTATE CREDIT  
PARTNERS LOAN FUNDING, LLC

By \_\_\_\_\_

Toby Cobb  
Authorized Person  
and Manager