UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

FORM S-8 REGISTRATION STATEMENT UNDER THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

EL POLLO LOCO HOLDINGS, INC.

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware (State or other jurisdiction of incorporation or organization) 20-3563182 (IRS Employer Identification No.)

3535 Harbor Blvd., Suite 100 Costa Mesa, California 92626 (Address of principal executive offices, including zip code)

El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc. 2018 Omnibus Equity Incentive Plan (Full title of the plan)

Laurance Roberts Chief Financial Officer El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc. 3535 Harbor Blvd., Suite 100 Costa Mesa, California 92626 (714) 599-5000 (Name, address, telephone number, including area code, of agent for service)

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, a smaller reporting company or an emerging growth company. See the definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer," "smaller reporting company" and "emerging growth company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

Large accelerated filer □ Non-accelerated filer □ (Do not check if a smaller reporting company) Accelerated filer⊠Smaller reporting company□Emerging growth company⊠

If an emerging growth company, indicate by check mark if the registrant has elected not to use the extended transition period for complying with any new or revised financial accounting standards provided pursuant to Section 7(a)(2)(B) of the Securities Act.

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

		Proposed	Proposed	
	Amount	maximum	maximum	
Title of securities	to be	offering price	aggregate	Amount of
to be registered	registered(1)	per share(2)	offering price	registration fee
Common Stock, \$0.01 par value per share	1,250,000	\$11.20	\$14,000,000.00	\$1,743.00

(1) Pursuant to Rule 416(c) of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "Securities Act"), this Registration Statement shall also cover an indeterminate amount of any additional shares of the Registrant's Common Stock, par value \$0.01 (the "Common Stock") that become issuable under the El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc. 2018 Omnibus Equity Incentive Plan (the "Plan") by reason of any stock dividend, stock split, recapitalization or other similar transaction effected without receipt of consideration, which results in an increase in the number of the Registrant's outstanding shares of Common Stock.

(2) Estimated solely for purposes of calculating the registration fee in accordance with Rules 457(c) and 457(h) under the Securities Act, based on the average of the high and low sales prices per share of the Common Stock as reported on the Nasdaq Stock Market LLC on August 3, 2018.

PART I INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE SECTION 10(A) PROSPECTUS

Item 1. Plan Information.*

Item 2. Registrant Information and Employee Program Annual Information.*

PART II

INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE REGISTRATION STATEMENT

Item 3. Incorporation of Documents by Reference.

The Registrant hereby incorporates by reference into this Registration Statement the following documents previously filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "Commission"):

- a. The Registrant's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 27, 2017 filed on March 9, 2018.
- b. The Registrant's Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the quarterly periods ended March 28, 2018, filed on May 7, 2018, and June 27, 2018, filed on August 3, 2018.
- c. Those portions of the Registrant's Definitive Proxy Statement on Schedule 14A filed on April 25, 2018, that are incorporated by reference into Part III of the Registrant's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 27, 2017.
- d. The Registrant's Current Reports on Form 8-K filed on January 8, 2018, January 19, 2018, February 28, 2018, June 8, 2018 and June 28, 2018.
- e. The description of the Registrant's Common Stock contained in the Registrant's registration statement on Form 8-A (File No. 001-36556) filed with the Commission on July 22, 2014, pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act"), including any amendment or report filed for the purpose of updating such description.

^{*} The information specified in Item 1 and Item 2 of Part I of this Registration Statement on Form S-8 (this "Registration Statement") is omitted from this filing in accordance with the provisions of Rule 428 under the Securities Act and the introductory note to Part I of Form S-8. The documents containing the information specified in Part I will be delivered to the participants in the Plan covered by this Registration Statement as required by Rule 428(b)(1). These documents and the documents incorporated by reference into this Registration Statement pursuant to Item 3 of Part II of this Registration Statement, taken together, constitute a prospectus that meets the requirements of Section 10(a) of the Securities Act.

³

In addition, all documents subsequently filed with the Commission by the Registrant pursuant to Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 and 15(d) of the Exchange Act, prior to the filing of a post-effective amendment which indicates that all securities offered herein have been sold or which deregisters all securities then remaining unsold, shall be deemed to be incorporated by reference into this Registration Statement and to be a part hereof from the date of filing of such documents. In no event, however, will any information that the Registrant discloses under Item 2.02 or 7.01 of any Current Report on Form 8-K that the Registrant may from time to time furnish to the Commission be incorporated by reference into, or otherwise become a part of, this Registration Statement.

Any statement contained in this Registration Statement or any document incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference herein shall be deemed to be modified or superseded for purposes of this Registration Statement to the extent that a statement contained herein or in any other subsequently filed document which also is or is deemed to be incorporated by reference herein is inconsistent with or modifies or supersedes such statement. Any such statement so modified or superseded shall not be deemed to constitute a part of this Registration Statement, except as so modified or superseded.

Item 4. Description of Securities.

Not applicable.

Item 5. Interests of Named Experts and Counsel.

Not applicable.

Item 6. Indemnification of Directors and Officers.

Section 102 of the DGCL allows a corporation to eliminate the personal liability of directors to a corporation or its stockholders for monetary damages for a breach of a fiduciary duty as a director, except where the director breached his duty of loyalty, failed to act in good faith, engaged in intentional misconduct or knowingly violated a law, authorized the payment of a dividend or approved a stock repurchase or redemption in violation of Section 174 of the DGCL or obtained an improper personal benefit.

Section 145 of the DGCL provides, among other things, that a corporation may indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding (other than an action by or in the right of the corporation) by reason of the fact that the person is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation, or is or was serving at the corporation's request as a director, officer, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by the person in connection with the action, suit or proceeding. The power to indemnify applies if (i) such person is successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit or proceeding or (ii) such person acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the corporation, and with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful. The power to indemnify applies to actions brought by or in the right of the

corporation as well, but only to the extent of defense expenses (including attorneys' fees but excluding amounts paid in settlement) actually and reasonably incurred and not to any satisfaction of judgment or settlement of the claim itself, and with the further limitation that in such actions no indemnification shall be made in the event of any adjudication of negligence or misconduct in the performance of his duties to the corporation, unless a court believes that in light of all the circumstances indemnification should apply.

The Registrant's certificate of incorporation states that no director shall be personally liable to the Registrant or any of its stockholders for monetary damages for breach of any fiduciary duty as a director, except to the extent such exemption from liability or limitation thereof is not permitted under the DGCL as it exists or may be amended. It further states that the Registrant shall indemnify any person that is or was a director or officer to the fullest extent authorized or permitted by law, including advancing legal expenses, except that for proceedings to enforce rights to indemnification, the Registrant shall not be obligated to indemnify any director or officer in connection with a proceeding initiated by such person unless such proceeding was authorized or consented to by the board. The Registrant may, to the extent authorized by the board, provide similar indemnification and advancement to employees and agents.

The Registrant's bylaws provide that the Registrant shall indemnify, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any legal proceeding by reason of the fact that such person is or was a director or officer of the Registrant, or is or was a director or officer of the Registrant serving at the request of the Registrant as a director, officer, employee or agent of another enterprise. However, such indemnification is permitted only if such person acted in good faith and in a manner such person reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Registrant, and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe such person's conduct was unlawful. Indemnification is authorized by case-by-case determination. Such determination shall be made, for current directors or officers, (i) by a majority vote of disinterested directors, (ii) by a committee of disinterested directors, (iii) if there are no such directors, or if such directors so direct, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion or (iv) by the stockholders. Such determination shall be made, for former directors and officers, by any person with authority to act on the matter on behalf of the Registrant. Expenses incurred by a director or officer in defending against a proceeding are payable before the final disposition upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of such director or officer to repay such amount if it shall ultimately be determined that such person is not entitled to indemnification.

The Registrant has entered into indemnification agreements with its directors and executive officers. Each indemnification agreement provides that the Registrant shall indemnify to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, and hold harmless against any and all indemnifiable amounts, including liabilities, expenses, damages, judgments, fines, penalties, and amounts paid in settlement of any claim. The agreements provide for advancement of any and all expenses. The indemnifee agrees to reimburse the Registrant if it is determined that the indemnifee would not be permitted to be indemnified under applicable law.

The Registrant maintains directors and officers liability insurance, including (a) coverage of the directors and officers in cases when the Registrant is unable to indemnify, and (b) coverage of the Registrant for reimbursement for indemnification payments.

The forms of Underwriting Agreement each filed as Exhibit 1.1 to, respectively, (i) the Registrant's Amendment No. 2 to Form S-1, Commission File No. 333-197001, as filed on July 22, 2014 (filed in executed form as Exhibit 1.1 to the Registrant's Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarterly period ended September 24, 2014, filed on November 7, 2014), and (ii) the Registrant's Amendment No. 1 to Form S-1, Commission File No. 333-200075, as filed on November 17, 2014, provide for indemnification by the underwriters against certain liabilities of the Registrant, each of its directors, each of its officers who signed the Registration Statement and each person, if any, who controls the Registrant.

Item 7. Exemption from Registration Claimed.

Not applicable.

Item 8. Exhibits.

Exhibit <u>No.</u>	Description
4.1	Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation of El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc.*
4.2	Amended and Restated By-Laws of El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc.*
4.3	2018 Omnibus Equity Incentive Plan
5.1	Opinion of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP
23.1	Consent of BDO USA, LLP
23.2	Consent of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP (included as part of Exhibit 5.1)
24.1	Power of Attorney (included on the signature page to this Registration Statement)

* Previously filed with the Commission as Exhibits 3.1 and 3.2 respectively to the Registrant's Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarterly period ended June 25, 2014, filed as of September 5, 2014, Commission File No. 001-36556, and incorporated herein by reference.

Item 9. Undertakings.

- (a) The undersigned Registrant hereby undertakes:
 - (1) To file, during any period in which offers or sales are being made, a post-effective amendment to this Registration Statement:
 - (i) To include any prospectus required by Section 10(a)(3) of the Securities Act;
 - (ii) To reflect in the prospectus any facts or events arising after the effective date of this Registration Statement (or the most recent post-effective amendment thereof) which, individually or in the aggregate, represent a fundamental change in the information set forth in this Registration Statement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any increase or decrease in volume of securities offered (if the total dollar value of securities offered would not exceed that which was registered) and any deviation from the low or high end of the estimated maximum offering range may be reflected in the form of prospectus filed with the Commission pursuant to Rule 424(b) if, in the aggregate, the changes in volume and price represent no more than a 20 percent change in the maximum aggregate offering price set forth in the "Calculation of Registration Fee" table in the effective registration statement;

(iii) To include any material information with respect to the plan of distribution not previously disclosed in this Registration Statement or any material change to such information in this Registration Statement;

provided, however, that paragraphs (a)(1)(i) and (a)(1)(ii) of this section do not apply if the information required to be included in a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in reports filed with or furnished to the Commission by the Registrant pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Exchange Act that are incorporated by reference in this Registration Statement.

- (2) That, for the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act, each such post-effective amendment shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.
- (3) To remove from registration by means of a post-effective amendment any of the securities being registered which remain unsold at the termination of the offering.

(b) The undersigned Registrant hereby undertakes that, for purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act, each filing of the Registrant's annual report pursuant to Section 13(a) or Section 15(d) of the Exchange Act (and, where applicable, each filing of an employee benefit plan's annual report pursuant to Section 15(d) of the Exchange Act) that is incorporated by reference in this Registration Statement shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

(c) Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act may be permitted to directors, officers and controlling persons of the Registrant pursuant to the foregoing provisions, or otherwise, the Registrant has been advised that in the opinion of the Commission such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and is, therefore, unenforceable. In the event that a claim for indemnification against such liabilities (other than the payment by the Registrant of expenses incurred or paid by a director, officer or controlling person of the Registrant in the successful defense of any action, suit or proceeding) is asserted by such director, officer or controlling person in connection with the securities being registered, the Registrant will, unless in the opinion of its counsel the matter has been settled by controlling precedent, submit to a court of appropriate jurisdiction the question whether such indemnification by it is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and will be governed by the final adjudication of such issue.

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, the registrant certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-8 and has duly caused this registration statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized, in the City of Costa Mesa, State of California, on August 6, 2018.

EL POLLO LOCO HOLDINGS, INC.

By: /s/ Laurance Roberts

Name: Laurance Roberts Title: Chief Financial Officer

POWER OF ATTORNEY

We, the undersigned officers and directors of El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc., hereby severally constitute and appoint Laurance Roberts our true and lawful attorney-in-fact and agent, with full power of substitution and resubstitution for him and in his name, place and stead, and in any and all capacities, to sign any and all amendments (including post-effective amendments) to this registration statement, and any other registration statement for the same offering pursuant to Rule 462 under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and to file the same, with all exhibits thereto and other documents in connection therewith, with the Securities and Exchange Commission, granting unto said attorney-in-fact and agent full power and authority to do and perform each and every act and thing requisite or necessary to be done in and about the premises, as full to all intents and purposes as he might or could do in person, hereby ratifying and confirming all that said attorney-in-fact and agent, or his substitute or substitutes, may lawfully do or cause to be done by virtue hereof.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, this registration statement has been signed by the following persons in the capacities and on the date indicated.

Signature	<u>Title</u>	Date
/s/ Bernard Acoca Bernard Acoca	Director, President and Chief Executive Officer (Principal Executive Officer)	August 6, 2018
/s/ Laurance Roberts Laurance Roberts	Chief Financial Officer (Principal Financial and Principal Accounting Officer)	August 6, 2018
/s/ Michael G. Maselli Michael G. Maselli	Chairman and Director	August 6, 2018
/s/ Douglas J. Babb Douglas J. Babb	Director	August 6, 2018
/s/ Samuel N. Borgese Samuel N. Borgese	Director	August 6, 2018
/s/ Mark Buller Mark Buller	Director	August 6, 2018
/s/ William R. Floyd William R. Floyd	Director	August 6, 2018
/s/ Dean C. Kehler Dean C. Kehler	Director	August 6, 2018
/s/ Carol Lynton Carol Lynton	Director	August 6, 2018
/s/ John M. Roth John M. Roth	Director	August 6, 2018

EL POLLO LOCO HOLDINGS, INC. 2018 OMNIBUS EQUITY INCENTIVE PLAN

Section 1. Purpose of Plan.

The name of the Plan is the El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc. 2018 Omnibus Equity Incentive Plan. The purposes of the Plan are to (i) provide an additional incentive to selected employees, directors, independent contractors and consultants of the Company or its Affiliates whose contributions are essential to the growth and success of the Company, (ii) strengthen the commitment of such individuals to the Company and its Affiliates, (iii) motivate those individuals to faithfully and diligently perform their responsibilities and (iv) attract and retain competent and dedicated individuals whose efforts will result in the long-term growth and profitability of the Company. To accomplish these purposes, the Plan provides that the Company may grant Options, Share Appreciation Rights, Restricted Shares, Restricted Stock Units, Other Share-Based Awards, Cash Awards or any combination of the foregoing.

Section 2. Definitions.

For purposes of the Plan, the following terms shall be defined as set forth below:

(a) "<u>Administrator</u>" means the Board, or, if and to the extent the Board does not administer the Plan, the Committee in accordance with Section 3 hereof.

(b) "<u>Affiliate</u>" means a Person that directly, or indirectly through one or more intermediaries, controls, or is controlled by, or is under common control with, the Person specified as of any date of determination.

(c) "<u>Applicable Laws</u>" means the applicable requirements under U.S. federal and state corporate laws, U.S. federal and state securities laws, including the Code, any stock exchange or quotation system on which the Common Stock is listed or quoted and the applicable laws of any other country or jurisdiction where Awards are granted under the Plan, as are in effect from time to time.

(d) "<u>Award</u>" means any Option, Share Appreciation Right, Restricted Share, Restricted Stock Unit, Other Share-Based Award or Cash Award granted under the Plan.

(e) "<u>Award Agreement</u>" means any written notice, agreement, contract or other instrument or document evidencing an Award, including through electronic medium, which shall contain such terms and conditions with respect to an Award as the Administrator shall determine, consistent with the Plan.

(f) "Beneficial Owner" (or any variant thereof) has the meaning defined in Rule 13d-3 under the Exchange Act.

(g) "Board" means the Board of Directors of the Company.

(h) "<u>Bylaws</u>" mean the bylaws of the Company, as may be amended and/or restated from time to time.

(i) "<u>Cash Award</u>" means cash awarded under Section 11 of the Plan, including cash awarded as a bonus or upon the attainment of performance goals or otherwise as permitted under the Plan.

(j) "<u>Cause</u>" has the meaning assigned to such term in any individual service, employment or severance agreement or Award Agreement with the Participant or, if no such agreement exists or if such agreement does not define "Cause," then "Cause" means (i) the conviction, guilty plea or plea of "no contest" by the Participant to any felony or a crime involving moral turpitude or the Participant's commission of any other act or omission involving dishonesty or fraud, (ii) the substantial and repeated failure of the Participant to perform duties of the office held by the Participant, (iii) the Participant's gross negligence, willful misconduct or breach of fiduciary duty with respect to the Company or any of its Subsidiaries or Affiliates, (iv) any breach by the Participant of any restrictive covenants to which the Participant is subject, and/or (v) the Participant's engagement in any conduct which is or can reasonably be expected to be materially detrimental or injurious to the business or reputation of the Company or its Affiliates. Any voluntary termination of employment or service by the Participant in anticipation of an involuntary termination of the Participant's employment or service, as applicable, for Cause shall be deemed to be a termination for Cause.

(k) "<u>Change in Capitalization</u>" means any (i) merger, consolidation, reclassification, recapitalization, spin-ott, repurchase or other reorganization or corporate transaction or event, (ii) special or extraordinary dividend or other extraordinary distribution (whether in the form of cash, Common Stock or other property), stock split, reverse stock split, share subdivision or consolidation, (iii) combination or exchange of shares or (iv) other change in corporate structure, which, in any such case, the Administrator determines, in its sole discretion, affects the Shares such that an adjustment pursuant to Section 5 hereof is appropriate.

(l) "<u>Change in Control</u>" means the first occurrence of an event set forth in any one of the following paragraphs following the Effective Date:

(1) any Person is or becomes the Beneficial Owner, directly or indirectly, of securities of the Company (not including in the securities Beneficially Owned by such Person which were acquired directly from the Company or any Affiliate thereof) representing more than fifty percent (50%) of the combined voting power of the Company's then outstanding securities, excluding any Person who becomes such a Beneficial Owner in connection with a transaction described in clause (i) of paragraph (3) below; or

(2) the date on which individuals who constitute the Board as of the Effective Date and any new director (other than a director whose initial assumption of office is in connection with an actual or threatened election contest, including, but not limited to, a consent solicitation, relating to the election of directors of the Company) whose appointment or election by the Board or nomination for election by the Company's stockholders was approved or recommended by a vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the directors then still in office who either were directors on the Effective Date or whose appointment, election or nomination for election was previously so approved or recommended cease for any reason to constitute a majority of the number of directors serving on the Board; or

(3) there is consummated a merger or consolidation of the Company or any direct or indirect Subsidiary with any other corporation or other entity, other than (i) a merger or consolidation (A) which results in the voting securities of the Company outstanding immediately prior to such merger or consolidation continuing to represent (either by remaining outstanding or by being converted into voting securities of the surviving entity or any parent thereof), in combination with the ownership of any trustee or other fiduciary holding securities under an employee benefit plan of the Company or any Subsidiary, fifty percent (50%) or more of the combined voting power of the securities of the Company or such surviving entity or any parent thereof outstanding immediately after such merger or consolidation and (B) following which the individuals who comprise the Board immediately prior thereto constitute at least a majority of the board of directors of the Company, the entity surviving such merger or consolidation effected to implement a recapitalization of the Company (or similar transaction) in which no Person is or becomes the Beneficial Owner, directly or indirectly, of securities of the Company (not including in the securities Beneficially Owned by such Person any securities acquired directly from the Company or its Affiliates) representing more than fifty percent (50%) of the combined voting power of the Company's then outstanding securities; or

(4) the stockholders of the Company approve a plan of complete liquidation or dissolution of the Company or there is consummated an agreement for the sale or disposition by the Company of all or substantially all of the Company's assets, other than (A) a sale or disposition by the Company of all or substantially all of the Company's assets to an entity, more than fifty percent (50%) of the combined voting power of the voting securities of which are owned by stockholders of the Company following the completion of such transaction in substantially the same proportions as their ownership of the Company immediately prior to such sale or (B) a sale or disposition of all or substantially all of the Company's assets immediately following which the individuals who

comprise the Board immediately prior thereto constitute at least a majority of the board of directors of the entity to which such assets are sold or disposed or, if such entity is a subsidiary, the ultimate parent thereof. Notwithstanding the foregoing, (i) a Change in Control shall not be deemed to have occurred by virtue of the consummation of any transaction or series of integrated transactions immediately following which the holders of Common Stock immediately prior to such transaction or series of transactions continue to have substantially the same proportionate ownership in an entity which owns all or substantially all of the assets of the Company immediately following such transaction or series of transactions and (ii) to the extent required to avoid accelerated taxation and/or tax penalties under Section 409A of the Code, a Change in Control shall be deemed to have occurred under the Plan with respect to any Award that constitutes deferred compensation under Section 409A of the Code only if a change in the ownership or effective control of the Company or a change in ownership of a substantial portion of the assets of the Company shall also be deemed to have occurred under Section 409A of the Code. For purposes of this definition of Change in Control, the term "Person" shall not include (i) the Company or any Subsidiary thereof, (ii) a trustee or other fiduciary holding securities under an employee benefit plan of the Company or any Subsidiary thereof, (iii) an underwriter temporarily holding securities pursuant to an offering of such securities, or (iv) a corporation owned, directly or indirectly, by the stockholders of the Company in substantially the same proportions as their ownership of shares of the Company.

(m) "Code" means the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended from time to time, or any successor thereto.

(n) "<u>Committee</u>" means any committee or subcommittee the Board may appoint to administer the Plan. Subject to the discretion of the Board, the Committee shall be composed entirely of individuals who meet the qualifications of a "non-employee director" within the meaning of Rule 16b-3 under the Exchange Act and any other qualifications required by the applicable stock exchange on which the Common Stock is traded.

(o) "<u>Common Stock</u>" means the common stock of the Company, having a par value of \$0.01 per share.

(p) "<u>Company</u>" means El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc., a Delaware corporation (or any successor company, except as the term "Company" is used in the definition of "Change in Control" above).

(q) "<u>Disability</u>" has the meaning assigned to such term in any individual service, employment or severance agreement or Award Agreement with the Participant or, if no such agreement exists or if such agreement does not define "Disability," then "Disability" means that a Participant, as determined by the Administrator in its sole discretion, (i) is unable to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment which can be expected to result in death or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than twelve (12) months, or (ii) is, by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment which can be expected to result in death or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than twelve (12) months, receiving income replacement benefits for a period of not less than three (3) months under an accident and health plan covering employees of the Company or an Affiliate thereof.

(r) "Effective Date" has the meaning set forth in Section 18 hereof.

(s) "<u>Eligible Recipient</u>" means an employee, director, independent contractor or consultant of the Company or any Affiliate of the Company who has been selected as an eligible participant by the Administrator; <u>provided</u>, <u>however</u>, to the extent required to avoid accelerated taxation and/or tax penalties under Section 409A of the Code, an Eligible Recipient of an Option or a Stock Appreciation Right means an employee, non-employee director, independent contractor or consultant of the Company or any Affiliate of the Company with respect to whom the Company is an "eligible issuer of service recipient stock" within the meaning of Section 409A of the Code.

(t) "Exchange Act" means the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended from time to time.

(u) "Exempt Award" shall mean the following:

(1) An Award granted in assumption of, or in substitution for, outstanding awards previously granted by a corporation or other entity acquired by the Company or any of its Subsidiaries or with which the Company or any of its Subsidiaries combines by merger or otherwise. The terms and conditions of any such Awards may vary from the terms and conditions set forth in the Plan to the extent the Administrator at the time of grant may deem appropriate, subject to Applicable Laws.

(2) An "employment inducement" award as described in the applicable stock exchange listing manual or rules may be granted under the Plan from time to time. The terms and conditions of any "employment inducement" award may vary from the terms and conditions set forth in the Plan to such extent as the Administrator at the time of grant may deem appropriate, subject to Applicable Laws.

(3) An award that an Eligible Recipient purchases at Fair Market Value (including awards that an Eligible Recipient elects to receive in lieu of fully vested compensation that is otherwise due) whether or not the Shares are delivered immediately or on a deferred basis.

(v) "<u>Exercise Price</u>" means, (i) with respect to any Option, the per share price at which a holder of such Option may purchase Shares issuable upon exercise of such Award, and (ii) with respect to a Share Appreciation Right, the base price per share of such Share Appreciation Right.

(w) "<u>Fair Market Value</u>" of a share of Common Stock or another security as of a particular date shall mean the fair market value as determined by the Administrator in its sole discretion; <u>provided</u>, <u>that</u>, (i) if the Common Stock or other security is admitted to trading on a national securities exchange, the fair market value on any date shall be the closing sale price reported on such date, or if no shares were traded on such date, on the last preceding date for which there was a sale of a share of Common Stock on such exchange, or (ii) if the Common Stock or other security is then traded in an over-the-counter market, the fair market value on any date shall be the average of the closing bid and asked prices for such share in such over-the-counter market for the last preceding date on which there was a sale of such share in such market.

(x) "Free Standing Rights" has the meaning set forth in Section 8.

(y) "<u>Good Reason</u>" has the meaning assigned to such term in any individual service, employment or severance agreement or Award Agreement with the Participant or, if no such agreement exists or if such agreement does not define "Good Reason," "Good Reason" and any provision of this Plan that refers to "Good Reason" shall not be applicable to such Participant.

(z) "<u>Grandfathered Arrangement</u>" means an Award which is provided pursuant to a written binding contract in effect on November 2, 2017, and which was not modified in any material respect on or after November 2, 2017, within the meaning of Section 13601(e)(2) of P.L. 115.97, as may be amended from time to time (including any rules and regulations promulgated thereunder).

(aa) "Incentive Compensation" means annual cash bonus and any Award.

(ab) "ISO" means an Option intended to be and designated as an "incentive stock option" within the meaning of Section 422 of the Code.

(ac) "Nonqualified Stock Option" shall mean an Option that is not designated as an ISO.

(ad) "<u>Option</u>" means an option to purchase shares of Common Stock granted pursuant to Section 7 hereof. The term "Option" as used in the Plan includes the terms "Nonqualified Stock Option" and "ISO."

(ae) "<u>Other Share-Based Award</u>" means a right or other interest granted pursuant to Section 10 hereof that may be denominated or payable in, valued in whole or in part by reference to, or otherwise based on or related to, Common Stock, including, but not limited to, unrestricted Shares, dividend equivalents or performance units, each of which may be subject to the attainment of performance goals or a period of continued provision of service or employment or other terms or conditions as permitted under the Plan.

(af) "<u>Participant</u>" means any Eligible Recipient selected by the Administrator, pursuant to the Administrator's authority provided for in Section 3 below, to receive grants of Awards, and, upon his or her death, his or her successors, heirs, executors and administrators, as the case may be.

4

(ag) "<u>Person</u>" shall have the meaning given in Section 3(a)(9) of the Exchange Act, as modified and used in Sections 13(d) and 14(d) thereof.

(ah) "Plan" means this 2018 Omnibus Equity Incentive Plan.

(ai) "Prior Plan" means the Company's 2014 Omnibus Equity Incentive Plan as in effect immediately prior to the Effective Date.

(aj) "<u>Related Rights</u>" has the meaning set forth in Section 8.

(ak) "<u>Restricted Share</u>" means a Share granted pursuant to Section 9 below subject to certain restrictions that lapse at the end of a specified period (or periods) of time and/or upon attainment of specified performance objectives.

(al) Restricted Period" has the meaning set forth in Section 9.

(am) "<u>Restricted Stock Unit</u>" means the right granted pursuant to Section 9 hereof to receive a Share at the end of a specified restricted period (or periods) of time and/or upon attainment of specified performance objectives.

(an) "<u>Rule 16b-3</u>" has the meaning set forth in Section 3.

(ao) "Section 16 Officer" means any officer of the Company whom the Board has determined is subject to the reporting requirements of Section 16 of the Exchange Act, whether or not such individual is a Section 16 Officer at the time the determination to recoup compensation is made.

(ap) "<u>Shares</u>" means Common Stock reserved for issuance under the Plan, as adjusted pursuant to the Plan, and any successor (pursuant to a merger, consolidation or other reorganization) security.

(aq) "<u>Share Appreciation Right</u>" means a right granted pursuant to Section 8 hereof to receive an amount equal to the excess, if any, of (i) the aggregate Fair Market Value, as of the date such Award or portion thereof is surrendered, of the Shares covered by such Award or such portion thereof, over (ii) the aggregate Exercise Price of such Award or such portion thereof.

(ar) "<u>Subsidiary</u>" means, with respect to any Person, as of any date of determination, any other Person as to which such first Person owns or otherwise controls, directly or indirectly, more than 50% of the voting shares or other similar interests or a sole general partner interest or managing member or similar interest of such other Person.

(as) "<u>Term</u>" has the meaning set forth in Section 3.

(at) "Transfer" has the meaning set forth in Section 16.

Section 3. Administration.

(a) The Plan shall be administered by the Administrator and shall be administered, to the extent applicable, in accordance with Rule 16b-3 under the Exchange Act ("<u>Rule 16b-3</u>").

(b) Pursuant to the terms of the Plan, the Administrator, subject, in the case of any Committee, to any restrictions on the authority delegated to it by the Board, shall have the power and authority, without limitation:

(1) to select those Eligible Recipients who shall be Participants;

(2) to determine whether and to what extent Options, Share Appreciation Rights, Restricted Shares, Restricted Stock Units, Cash Awards, Other Share-Based Awards or a combination of any of the foregoing, are to be granted hereunder to Participants;

(3) to determine the number of Shares to be covered by each Award granted hereunder;

(4) to determine the terms and conditions, not inconsistent with the terms of the Plan, of each Award granted hereunder (including, but not limited to, (i) the restrictions applicable to Restricted Shares or Restricted Stock Units and the conditions under which restrictions applicable to such Restricted Shares or Restricted Stock Units shall lapse, (ii) the performance goals and periods applicable to Awards, (iii) the Exercise Price of each Option and each Share Appreciation Right or the purchase price of any other Award, (iv) the vesting schedule and terms applicable to each Award, (v) the number of Shares or amount of cash or other property subject to each Award and (vi) subject to the requirements of Section 409A of the Code (to the extent applicable) and to Section 4(e) of the Plan, any amendments to the terms and conditions of outstanding Awards, including, but not limited to, extending the exercise period of such Awards and accelerating the vesting and/or payment schedules of such Awards);

(5) to determine the terms and conditions, not inconsistent with the terms of the Plan, which shall govern all written instruments evidencing Awards;

(6) to determine the Fair Market Value in accordance with the terms of the Plan;

(7) to determine the duration and purpose of leaves of absence which may be granted to a Participant without constituting termination of the Participant's service or employment for purposes of Awards granted under the Plan;

(8) to adopt, alter and repeal such administrative rules, regulations, guidelines and practices governing the Plan as it shall from time to time deem advisable;

(9) to construe and interpret the terms and provisions of, and supply or correct omissions in, the Plan and any Award issued under the Plan (and any Award Agreement relating thereto), and to otherwise supervise the administration of the Plan and to exercise all powers and authorities either specifically granted under the Plan or necessary and advisable in the administration of the Plan; and

(10) to prescribe, amend and rescind rules and regulations relating to sub-plans established for the purpose of satisfying applicable non-United States laws or for qualifying for favorable tax treatment under applicable non-United States laws, which rules and regulations may be set forth in an appendix or appendixes to the Plan.

(c) Subject to Section 5, neither the Board nor the Committee shall have the authority to reprice or cancel and regrant any Award at a lower exercise, base or purchase price or cancel any Award with an exercise, base or purchase price in exchange for cash, property or other Awards without first obtaining the approval of the Company's shareholders.

(d) All decisions made by the Administrator pursuant to the provisions of the Plan shall be final, conclusive and binding on all Persons, including the Company and the Participants.

(e) The expenses of administering the Plan shall be borne by the Company and its Affiliates.

(f) If at any time or to any extent the Board shall not administer the Plan, then the functions of the Administrator specified in the Plan shall be exercised by the Committee. Except as otherwise provided in the Certificate of Incorporation or Bylaws of the Company, any action of the Committee with respect to the administration of the Plan shall be taken by a majority vote at a meeting at which a quorum is duly constituted or unanimous written consent of the Committee's members.

Section 4. Shares Reserved for Issuance Under the Plan.

(a) Subject to Section 5 hereof, the number of shares of Common Stock that are reserved and available for issuance pursuant to Awards granted under the Plan shall be equal to 1,250,000 shares, plus the number of shares of Common Stock reserved, but unissued under the Prior Plan; <u>provided</u>, <u>that</u>, shares of Common Stock issued under the Plan with respect to an Exempt Award shall not count against such share limit. Following the Effective Date, no further awards shall be issued under the Prior Plan, but all awards under the Prior Plan which are outstanding as of the Effective Date (including any Grandfathered Arrangement) shall continue to be governed by the terms, conditions and procedures set forth in the Prior Plan and any applicable Award Agreement.

(b) Shares issued under the Plan may, in whole or in part, be authorized but unissued Shares or Shares that shall have been or may be reacquired by the Company in the open market, in private transactions or otherwise. If an Award entitles the Participant to receive or purchase Shares, the number of Shares covered by such Award or to which such Award relates shall be counted on the date of grant of such Award against the aggregate number of Shares available for granting Awards under the Plan. If any Shares subject to an Award are forfeited, cancelled, exchanged or surrendered or if an Award otherwise terminates or expires without a distribution of shares to the Participant, the Shares with respect to such Award shall, to the extent of any such forfeiture, cancellation, exchange, surrender, termination or expiration, again be available for granting Awards under the Plan. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Shares surrendered or withheld as payment of either the Exercise Price of an Award (including Shares otherwise underlying a Share Appreciation Right that are retained by the Company to account for

the Exercise Price of such Share Appreciation Right) and/or withholding taxes in respect of an Award shall no longer be available for grant under the Plan. In addition, (i) to the extent an Award is denominated in shares of Common Stock, but paid or settled in cash, the number of shares of Common Stock with respect to which such payment or settlement is made shall again be available for grants of Awards pursuant to the Plan and (ii) shares of Common Stock underlying Awards that can only be settled in cash shall not be counted against the aggregate number of shares of Common Stock available for Awards under the Plan. Upon the exercise of any Award granted in tandem with any other Awards, such related Awards shall be cancelled to the extent of the number of Shares as to which the Award is exercised and, notwithstanding the foregoing, such number of shares shall no longer be available for grant under the Plan.

(c) No more than 1,070,477 Shares shall be issued pursuant to the exercise of ISOs.

(d) No Participant who is a non-employee director of the Company shall be granted Awards during any calendar year that, when aggregated with such non-employee director's cash fees with respect to such calendar year, exceed \$500,000 in total value (with Cash Awards or other cash fees measured for this purpose at their value upon payment and any other Awards measured for this purpose at their grant date fair value as determined for the Company's financial reporting purposes).

(e) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Plan except for Section 12 of the Plan, any Awards granted under the Plan (other than such Awards representing a maximum of five percent (5%) of the Shares reserved for issuance under the Plan pursuant to Section 4(a) hereof) shall be granted subject to a minimum vesting period of at least twelve (12) months.

Section 5. Equitable Adjustments.

In the event of any Change in Capitalization, an equitable substitution or proportionate adjustment shall be made in (i) the aggregate number and kind of securities reserved for issuance under the Plan pursuant to Section 4, (ii) the kind, number of securities subject to, and the Exercise Price subject to outstanding Options and Share Appreciation Rights granted under the Plan, (iii) the kind, number and purchase price of Shares or other securities or the amount of cash or amount or type of other property subject to outstanding Restricted Shares, Restricted Stock Units or Other Share-Based Awards granted under the Plan; and/or (iv) the terms and conditions of any outstanding Awards (including, without limitation, any applicable performance targets or criteria with respect thereto); provided, however, that any fractional shares resulting from the adjustment shall be eliminated. Such other equitable substitutions or adjustments shall be made as may be determined by the Administrator, in its sole discretion. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, in connection with a Change in Capitalization, the Administrator may provide, in its sole discretion, but subject in all events to the requirements of Section 409A of the Code, for the cancellation of any outstanding Award granted hereunder in exchange for payment in cash or other property having an aggregate Fair Market Value equal to the Fair Market Value of the Shares, cash or other property covered by such Award, reduced by the aggregate Exercise Price or purchase price thereof, if any; provided, however, that if the Exercise Price or purchase price of any outstanding Award is equal to or greater than the Fair Market Value of the shares of Common Stock, cash or other property covered by such Award, the Administrator may cancel such Award without the payment of any consideration to the Participant. Further, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, with respect to Awards subject to foreign laws, adjustments made hereunder shall be made in compliance with applicable requirements. Except to the extent determined by the Administrator, any adjustments to ISOs under this Section 5 shall be made only to the extent not constituting a "modification" within the meaning of Section 424(h)(3) of the Code. The Administrator's determinations pursuant to this Section 5 shall be final, binding and conclusive.

Section 6. Eligibility.

The Participants in the Plan shall be selected from time to time by the Administrator, in its sole discretion, from those individuals that qualify as Eligible Recipients.

Section 7. Options.

(a) <u>General</u>. Options granted under the Plan shall be designated as Nonqualified Stock Options or ISOs. Each Participant who is granted an Option shall enter into an Award Agreement with the Company, containing such terms and conditions as the Administrator shall determine, in its sole discretion, including, among other things, the Exercise Price of the Option, the term of the Option and provisions regarding exercisability of the Option, and whether the Option is intended to be an ISO or a Nonqualified Stock Option (and in the event the Award Agreement has no such designation, the Option shall be a Nonqualified Stock Option). The provisions of each Option need not be the same with respect to each Participant. More than one Option may be granted to the same Participant and be outstanding concurrently hereunder. Options granted under the Plan shall be subject to the terms and conditions set forth in this Section 7 and shall contain such additional terms and conditions, not inconsistent with the terms of the Plan, as the Administrator shall deem desirable and set forth in the applicable Award Agreement.

(b) <u>Exercise Price</u>. The Exercise Price of Shares purchasable under an Option shall be determined by the Administrator in its sole discretion at the time of grant, but in no event shall the exercise price of an Option be less than one hundred percent (100%) of the Fair Market Value of a share of Common Stock on the date of grant.

(c) <u>Option Term</u>. The maximum term of each Option shall be fixed by the Administrator, but no Option shall be exercisable more than ten (10) years after the date such Option is granted. Each Option's term is subject to earlier expiration pursuant to the applicable provisions in the Plan and the Award Agreement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, subject to Section 4(e) of the Plan, the Administrator shall have the authority to accelerate the exercisability of any outstanding Option at such time and under such circumstances as the Administrator, in its sole discretion, deems appropriate.

(d) <u>Exercisability</u>. Each Option shall be exercisable at such time or times and subject to such terms and conditions, including the attainment of performance goals, as shall be determined by the Administrator in the applicable Award Agreement. The Administrator may also provide that any Option shall be exercisable only in installments, and the Administrator may waive such installment exercise provisions at any time, in whole or in part, based on such factors as the Administrator may determine in its sole discretion.

(e) <u>Method of Exercise</u>. Options may be exercised in whole or in part by giving written notice of exercise to the Company specifying the number of whole Shares to be purchased, accompanied by payment in full of the aggregate Exercise Price of the Shares so purchased in cash or its equivalent, as determined by the Administrator. As determined by the Administrator, in its sole discretion, with respect to any Option or category of Options, payment in whole or in part may also be made (i) by means of consideration received under any cashless exercise procedure approved by the Administrator (including the withholding of Shares otherwise issuable upon exercise), (ii) in the form of unrestricted Shares already owned by the Participant which have a Fair Market Value on the date of surrender equal to the aggregate exercise price of the Shares as to which such Option shall be exercised, (iii) any other form of consideration approved by the Administrator and permitted by Applicable Laws or (iv) any combination of the foregoing.

(f) <u>ISOs</u>. The terms and conditions of ISOs granted hereunder shall be subject to the provisions of Section 422 of the Code and the terms, conditions, limitations and administrative procedures established by the Administrator from time to time in accordance with the Plan. At the discretion of the Administrator, ISOs may be granted only to an employee of the Company, its "parent corporation" (as such term is defined in Section 424(e) of the Code) or a Subsidiary of the Company.

(1) *ISO Grants to 10% Stockholders*. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Plan, if an ISO is granted to a Participant who owns shares representing more than ten percent (10%) of the voting power of all classes of shares of the Company, its "parent corporation" (as such term is defined in Section 424(e) of the Code) or a Subsidiary of the Company, the term of the ISO shall not exceed five (5) years from the time of grant of such ISO and the Exercise Price shall be at least one hundred and ten percent (110%) of the Fair Market Value of the Shares on the date of grant.

(2) \$100,000 Per Year Limitation For ISOs. To the extent the aggregate Fair Market Value (determined on the date of grant) of the Shares for which ISOs are exercisable for the first time by any Participant during any calendar year (under all plans of the Company) exceeds \$100,000, such excess ISOs shall be treated as Nonqualified Stock Options.

(3) *Disqualifying Dispositions*. Each Participant awarded an ISO under the Plan shall notify the Company in writing immediately after the date the Participant makes a "disqualifying disposition" of any Share acquired pursuant to the exercise of such ISO. A "disqualifying disposition" is any disposition (including any sale) of such Shares before the later of (i) two years after the date of grant of the ISO and (ii) one year after the date the Participant acquired the Shares by exercising the ISO. The Company may, if determined by the Administrator and in accordance with procedures established by it, retain possession of any Shares acquired pursuant to the exercise of an ISO as agent for the applicable Participant until the end of the period described in the preceding sentence, subject to complying with any instructions from such Participant as to the sale of such Shares.

(g) <u>Rights as Stockholder</u>. A Participant shall have no rights to dividends, dividend equivalents or distributions or any other rights of a stockholder with respect to the Shares subject to an Option until the Participant has given written notice of the exercise thereof, and has paid in full for such Shares and has satisfied the requirements of Section 15 hereof.

(h) <u>Termination of Employment or Service</u>. Treatment of an Option upon termination of employment of a Participant shall be provided for by the Administrator in the Award Agreement.

(i) <u>Other Change in Employment or Service Status</u>. An Option shall be affected, both with regard to vesting schedule and termination, by leaves of absence, including unpaid and un-protected leaves of absence, changes from full-time to part-time employment, partial Disability or other changes in the employment status or service status of a Participant, in the discretion of the Administrator.

Section 8. Share Appreciation Rights.

(a) <u>General</u>. Share Appreciation Rights may be granted either alone ("<u>Free Standing Rights</u>") or in conjunction with all or part of any Option granted under the Plan ("<u>Related Rights</u>"). Related Rights may be granted either at or after the time of the grant of such Option. The Administrator shall determine the Eligible Recipients to whom, and the time or times at which, grants of Share Appreciation Rights shall be made. Each Participant who is granted a Share Appreciation Right shall enter into an Award Agreement with the Company, containing such terms and conditions as the Administrator shall determine, in its sole discretion, including, among other things, the number of Shares to be awarded, the Exercise Price per Share, and all other conditions of Share Appreciation Rights. Notwithstanding the foregoing, no Related Right may be granted for more Shares than are subject to the Option to which it relates. The provisions of Share Appreciation Rights need not be the same with respect to each Participant. Share Appreciation Rights granted under the Plan shall be subject to the following terms and conditions set forth in this Section 8 and shall contain such additional terms and conditions, not inconsistent with the terms of the Plan, as the Administrator shall deem desirable, as set forth in the applicable Award Agreement.

(b) <u>Awards; Rights as Stockholder</u>. A Participant shall have no rights to dividends orany other rights of a stockholder with respect to the shares of Common Stock, if any, subject to a Stock Appreciation Right until the Participant has given written notice of the exercise thereof and has satisfied the requirements of Section 15 hereof.

(c) <u>Exercise Price</u>. The Exercise Price of Shares purchasable under a Share Appreciation Rights shall be determined by the Administrator in its sole discretion at the time of grant, but in no event shall the exercise price of a Share Appreciation Rights be less than one hundred percent (100%) of the Fair Market Value of a share of Common Stock on the date of grant.

(d) Exercisability.

(1) Share Appreciation Rights that are Free Standing Rights shall be exercisable at such time or times and subject to such terms and conditions as shall be determined by the Administrator in the applicable Award Agreement.

(2) Share Appreciation Rights that are Related Rights shall be exercisable only at such time or times and to the extent that the Options to which they relate shall be exercisable in accordance with the provisions of Section 7 hereof and this Section 8 of the Plan.

(e) Payment Upon Exercise.

(1) Upon the exercise of a Free Standing Right, the Participant shall be entitled to receive up to, but not more than, that number of Shares equal in value to the excess of the Fair Market Value as of the date of exercise over the Exercise Price per share specified in the Free Standing Right multiplied by the number of Shares in respect of which the Free Standing Right is being exercised.

(2) A Related Right may be exercised by a Participant by surrendering the applicable portion of the related Option. Upon such exercise and surrender, the Participant shall be entitled to receive up to, but not more than, that number of Shares equal in value to the excess of the Fair Market Value as of the date of exercise over the Exercise Price specified in the related Option multiplied by the number of Shares in respect of which the Related Right is being exercised. Options which have been so surrendered, in whole or in part, shall no longer be exercisable to the extent the Related Rights have been so exercised.

(3) Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Administrator may determine to settle the exercise of a Share Appreciation Right in cash (or in any combination of Shares and cash).

(f) <u>Termination of Employment or Service</u>. Treatment of an Share Appreciation Right upon termination of employment of a Participant shall be provided for by the Administrator in the Award Agreement.

(g) <u>Term</u>.

(1) The term of each Free Standing Right shall be fixed by the Administrator, but no Free Standing Right shall be exercisable more than ten (10) years after the date such right is granted.

(2) The term of each Related Right shall be the term of the Option to which it relates, but no Related Right shall be exercisable more than ten (10) years after the date such right is granted.

(h) <u>Other Change in Employment or Service Status</u>. Share Appreciation Rights shall be affected, both with regard to vesting schedule and termination, by leaves of absence, including unpaid and un-protected leaves of absence, changes from full-time to part-time employment, partial Disability or other changes in the employment or service status of a Participant, in the discretion of the Administrator.

Section 9. Restricted Shares and Restricted Stock Units.

(a) <u>General</u>. Restricted Shares or Restricted Stock Units may be issued under the Plan. The Administrator shall determine the Eligible Recipients to whom, and the time or times at which, Restricted Shares or Restricted Stock Units shall be made. Each Participant who is granted Restricted Shares or Restricted Stock Units shall enter into an Award Agreement with the Company, containing such terms and conditions as the Administrator shall determine, in its sole discretion, including, among other things, the number of Shares to be awarded; the price, if any, to be paid by the Participant for the acquisition of Restricted Shares or Restricted Stock Units; the period of time restrictions, performance goals or other conditions that apply to Transferability, delivery or vesting of such Awards (the "<u>Restricted Period</u>"); and all other conditions applicable to the Restricted Shares and Restricted Stock Units. If the restrictions, performance goals or conditions established by the Administrator are not attained, a Participant shall forfeit his or her Restricted Stock Units, in accordance with the terms of the grant. The provisions of the Restricted Shares or Restricted Stock Units need not be the same with respect to each Participant.

(b) <u>Awards and Certificates</u>. Except as otherwise provided below in Section 9(c), (i) each Participant who is granted an Award of Restricted Shares may, in the Company's sole discretion, be issued a share certificate in respect of such Restricted Shares; and (ii) any such certificate so issued shall be registered in the name of the Participant, and shall bear an appropriate legend referring to the terms, conditions and restrictions applicable to any such Award.

The Company may require that the share certificates, if any, evidencing Restricted Shares granted hereunder be held in the custody of the Company until the restrictions thereon shall have lapsed, and that, as a condition of any Award of Restricted Shares, the Participant shall have delivered a share transfer form, endorsed in blank, relating to the Shares covered by such Award. Certificates for shares of unrestricted Common Stock may, in the Company's sole discretion, be delivered to the Participant only after the Restricted Period has expired without forfeiture in such Restricted Stock Award.

With respect to Restricted Stock Units to be settled in Shares, at the expiration of the Restricted Period, share certificates in respect of the shares of Common Stock underlying such Restricted Stock Units may, in the Company's sole discretion, be delivered to the Participant, or his legal representative, in a number equal to the number of shares of Common Stock underlying the Restricted Stock Units Award.

Notwithstanding anything in the Plan to the contrary, any Restricted Shares or Restricted Stock Units to be settled in Shares (at the expiration of the Restricted Period, and whether before or after any vesting conditions have been satisfied) may, in the Company's sole discretion, be issued in uncertificated form.

Further, notwithstanding anything in the Plan to the contrary, with respect to Restricted Stock Units, at the expiration of the Restricted Period, Shares, or cash, as applicable, shall promptly be issued (either in certificated or uncertificated form) to the Participant, unless otherwise deferred in accordance with procedures established by the Company in accordance with Section 409A of the Code, and such issuance or payment shall in any event be made within such period as is required to avoid the imposition of a tax under Section 409A of the Code.

(c) <u>Restrictions and Conditions</u>. The Restricted Shares or Restricted Stock Units granted pursuant to this Section 9 shall be subject to the following restrictions and conditions and any additional restrictions or conditions as determined by the Administrator at the time of grant or, subject to Section 409A of the Code where applicable, thereafter:

(1) The Administrator may, in its sole discretion, provide for the lapse of restrictions in installments and may accelerate or waive such restrictions in whole or in part based on such factors and such circumstances as the Administrator may determine, in its sole discretion, including, but not limited to, the attainment of certain performance goals, the Participant's termination of employment or service with the Company or any Affiliate thereof, or the Participant's death or Disability. Notwithstanding the foregoing, upon a Change in Control, the outstanding Awards shall be subject to Section 12 hereof.

(2) Except as provided in the applicable Award Agreement, the Participant shall generally have the rights of a stockholder of the Company with respect to Restricted Shares during the Restricted Period; <u>provided</u>, <u>however</u>, that dividends declared during the Restricted Period with respect to an Award, shall only become payable if (and to the extent) the underlying Restricted Shares vest. Except as provided in the applicable Award Agreement, the Participant shall generally not have the rights of a stockholder with respect to Shares subject to Restricted Stock Units during the Restricted Period; <u>provided</u>, <u>however</u>, that, subject to Section 409A of the Code, an amount equal to dividends declared during the Restricted Period with respect to the number of Shares covered by Restricted Stock Units shall, unless otherwise set forth in an Award Agreement, be paid to the Participant at the time (and to the extent) Shares in respect of the related Restricted Stock Units are delivered to the Participant. Certificates for Shares of unrestricted Common Stock may, in the Company's sole discretion, be delivered to the Participant only after the Restricted Period has expired without forfeiture in respect of such Restricted Stock Units, except as the Administrator, in its sole discretion, shall otherwise determine.

(3) The rights of Participants granted Restricted Shares or Restricted Stock Units upon termination of employment or service as a director, independent contractor or consultant to the Company or to any Affiliate thereof terminates for any reason during the Restricted Period shall be set forth in the Award Agreement.

(d) <u>Form of Settlement</u>. The Administrator reserves the right in its sole discretion to provide (either at or after the grant thereof) that any Restricted Stock Unit represent the right to receive the amount of cash per unit that is determined by the Administrator in connection with the Award.

Section 10. Other Share-Based Awards.

Other Share-Based Awards may be issued under the Plan. Subject to the provisions of the Plan, the Administrator shall have sole and complete authority to determine the individuals to whom and the time or times at which such Other Share-Based Awards shall be granted. Each Participant who is granted an Other Share-Based Award shall enter into an Award Agreement with the Company, containing such terms and conditions as the Administrator shall determine, in its sole discretion, including, among other things, the number of shares of Common Stock to be granted pursuant to such Other Share-Based Awards, or the manner in which such Other Share-Based Awards shall be settled (e.g., in shares of Common Stock, cash or other property), or the conditions to the vesting and/or payment or settlement of such Other Share-Based Awards (which may include, but not be limited to, achievement of performance criteria) and all other terms and conditions of such Other Share-Based Awards. In the event that the Administrator grants a bonus in the form of Shares, the Shares constituting such bonus shall, as determined by the Administrator, be evidenced in uncertificated form or by a book entry record or a certificate issued in the name of the Participant to whom such grant was made and delivered to such Participant as soon as practicable after the date on which such bonus is payable. Notwithstanding anything set forth in the Plan to the contrary, any dividend or dividend equivalent Award issued hereunder shall be subject to the same restrictions, conditions and risks of forfeiture as apply to the underlying Award.

Section 11. Cash Awards.

The Administrator may grant Awards that are denominated in, or payable to Participants solely in, cash, as deemed by the Administrator to be consistent with the purposes of the Plan, and, such Cash Awards shall be subject to the terms, conditions, restrictions and limitations determined by the Administrator, in its sole discretion, from time to time. Awards granted pursuant to this Section 11 may be granted with value and payment contingent upon the achievement of performance goals.

Section 12. Change in Control.

Unless otherwise determined by the Administrator and evidenced in an Award Agreement, notwithstanding Section 4(e) of the Plan, in the event that (a) a Change in Control occurs, and (b) the Participant's employment or service is terminated by the Company, its successor or an Affiliate thereof without Cause or by the Participant for Good Reason (if applicable) on or after the effective date of the Change in Control but prior to twelve (12) months following the Change in Control, then:

(a) any unvested or unexercisable portion of any Award carrying a right to exercise shall become fully vested and exercisable; and

(b) the restrictions, deferral limitations, payment conditions and forfeiture conditions applicable to an Award granted under the Plan shall lapse and such Awards shall be deemed fully vested and any performance conditions imposed with respect to such Awards shall be deemed to be fully achieved at target performance levels.

If the Administrator determines in its discretion pursuant to Section 3(b)(4) hereof to accelerate the vesting of Options and/or Share Appreciation Rights in connection with a Change in Control, the Administrator shall also have discretion in connection with such action to provide that all Options and/or Share Appreciation Rights outstanding immediately prior to such Change in Control shall expire on the effective date of such Change in Control.

Section 13. Amendment and Termination.

The Board may amend, alter or terminate the Plan at any time, but no amendment, alteration or termination shall be made that would impair the rights of a Participant under any Award theretofore granted without such Participant's consent. The Board shall obtain approval of the Company's stockholders for any amendment that would require such approval in order to satisfy the requirements of any rules of the stock exchange on which the Common Stock is traded or other Applicable Law. The Administrator may amend the terms of any Award theretofore granted, prospectively or retroactively, but, subject to Section 5 of the Plan and the immediately preceding sentence, no such amendment shall materially impair the rights of any Participant without his or her consent.

Section 14. Unfunded Status of Plan.

The Plan is intended to constitute an "unfunded" plan for incentive compensation. With respect to any payments not yet made to a Participant by the Company, nothing contained herein shall give any such Participant any rights that are greater than those of a general creditor of the Company.

Section 15. Withholding Taxes.

Each Participant shall, no later than the date as of which the value of an Award first becomes includible in the gross income of such Participant for purposes of applicable taxes, pay to the Company, or make arrangements satisfactory to the Administrator regarding payment of an amount up to the maximum statutory tax rates in the Participant's applicable jurisdiction with respect to the Award, as determined by the Company. The obligations of the Company under the Plan shall be conditional on the making of such payments or arrangements, and the Company shall, to the extent permitted by Applicable Laws, have the right to deduct any such taxes from any payment of any kind otherwise due to such Participant. Whenever cash is to be paid pursuant to an Award, the Company shall have the right to deduct therefrom an amount sufficient to satisfy any applicable withholding tax requirements related thereto. Whenever Shares or property other than cash are to be delivered pursuant to an Award, the Company shall have the right to satisfy any related taxes to be withheld and applied to the tax obligations; provided, that, with the approval of the Administrator, a Participant may satisfy the foregoing requirement by either (i) electing to have the Company withhold from delivery of Shares or other property, as applicable, or (ii) delivering already owned unrestricted shares of Common Stock, in each case, having a value not exceeding the applicable taxes to be withheld and applied to the tax obligations. Such already owned and unrestricted shares of Common Stock shall be settled in cash. Such an election may be made with respect to all or any portion of the Shares to be delivered pursuant to an award. The Company may also use any other method of obtaining the necessary payment or proceeds, as permitted by Applicable Laws, to satisfy its withholding obligation with respect to any Award.

Section 16. Transfer of Awards.

Until such time as the Awards are fully vested and/or exercisable in accordance with the Plan or an Award Agreement, no purported sale, assignment, mortgage, hypothecation, transfer, charge, pledge, encumbrance, gift, transfer in trust (voting or other) or other disposition of, or creation of a security interest in or lien on, any Award or any agreement or commitment to do any of the foregoing (each, a "<u>Transfer</u>") by any holder thereof in violation of the provisions of the Plan or an Award Agreement will be valid, except with the prior written consent of the Administrator, which consent may be granted or withheld in the sole discretion of the Administrator. Any purported Transfer of an Award or any economic benefit or interest therein in violation of the Plan or an Award Agreement shall be null and void *ab initio* and shall not create any obligation or liability of the Company, and any Person purportedly acquiring any Award or any economic benefit or interest therein transferred in violation of the Plan or an Award Agreement shall be null and void *ab initio* and shall not create any obligation or liability of the Company, and any Person purportedly acquiring any Award or any economic benefit or interest therein transferred in violation of the Plan or an Award Agreement shall not be entitled to be recognized as a holder of such Shares or other property underlying such Award. Unless otherwise determined by the Administrator in accordance with the provisions of the immediately preceding sentence, an Option or a Share Appreciation Right may be exercised, during the lifetime of the Participant, only by the Participant or, during any period during which the Participant is under a legal Disability, by the Participant's guardian or legal representative.

Section 17. Continued Employment or Service.

Neither the adoption of the Plan nor the grant of an Award shall confer upon any Eligible Recipient any right to continued employment or service with the Company or any Affiliate thereof, as the case may be, nor shall it interfere in any way with the right of the Company or any Affiliate thereof to terminate the employment or service of any of its Eligible Recipients at any time.

Section 18. Effective Date.

The Plan was adopted by the Board on April 21, 2018 and shall become effective on the date that it is approved by the Company's stockholders (the "Effective Date").

Section 19. Electronic Signature.

Participant's electronic signature of an Award Agreement shall have the same validity and effect as a signature affixed by hand.

Section 20. Term of Plan.

No Award shall be granted pursuant to the Plan on or after the tenth anniversary of the Effective Date, but Awards theretofore granted may extend beyond that date.

Section 21. Securities Matters and Regulations.

(a) Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, the obligation of the Company to sell or deliver Shares with respect to any Award granted under the Plan shall be subject to all Applicable Laws, rules and regulations, including all applicable federal and state securities laws, and the obtaining of all such approvals by governmental agencies as may be deemed necessary or appropriate by the Administrator. The Administrator may require, as a condition of the issuance and delivery of certificates evidencing shares of Common Stock pursuant to the terms hereof, that the recipient of such shares make such agreements and representations, and that such certificates bear such legends, as the Administrator, in its sole discretion, deems necessary or advisable.

(b) Each Award is subject to the requirement that, if at any time the Administrator determines that the listing, registration or qualification of Shares is required by any securities exchange or under any state or federal law, or the consent or approval of any governmental regulatory body is necessary or desirable as a condition of, or in connection with, the grant of an Award or the issuance of Shares, no such Award shall be granted or payment made or Shares issued, in whole or in part, unless listing, registration, qualification, consent or approval has been effected or obtained free of any conditions not acceptable to the Administrator.

(c) In the event that the disposition of Shares acquired pursuant to the Plan is not covered by a then current registration statement under the Securities Act and is not otherwise exempt from such registration, such Shares shall be restricted against transfer to the extent required by the Securities Act or regulations thereunder, and the Administrator may require a Participant receiving Common Stock pursuant to the Plan, as a condition precedent to receipt of such Common Stock, to represent to the Company in writing that the Common Stock acquired by such Participant is acquired for investment only and not with a view to distribution.

Section 22. Section 409A of the Code.

The Plan as well as payments and benefits under the Plan are intended to be exempt from, or to the extent subject thereto, to comply with Section 409A of the Code, and, accordingly, to the maximum extent permitted, the Plan shall be interpreted in accordance therewith. Notwithstanding anything contained herein to the contrary, to the extent required in order to avoid accelerated taxation and/or tax penalties under Section 409A of the Code, the Participant shall not be considered to have terminated employment or service with the Company for purposes of the Plan and no payment shall be due to the Participant under the Plan or any Award until the Participant would be considered to have incurred a "separation from service" from the Company and its Affiliates within the meaning of Section 409A of the Code. Any payments described in the Plan that are due within the "short term deferral period" as defined in Section 409A of the Code shall not be treated as deferred compensation unless Applicable Law requires otherwise. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Plan, to the extent that any Awards (or any other amounts payable under any plan, program or arrangement of the Company or any of its Affiliates) are payable upon a separation from service and such payment would result in the imposition of any individual tax and penalty interest charges imposed under Section 409A of the Code, the settlement and payment of such awards (or other amounts) shall instead be made on the first business day after the date that is six (6) months following such separation from service (or death, if earlier). Each amount to be paid or benefit to be provided under this Plan shall be construed as a separate identified payment for purposes of Section 409A of the Code. The Company makes no representation that any or all of the payments or benefits described in this Plan will be exempt from or comply with Section 409A of the Code and makes no undertaking to preclude Section 409A of the Code from applying to any such payment. The Participa

Section 23. Notification of Election Under Section 83(b) of the Code.

If any Participant shall, in connection with the acquisition of shares of Common Stock under the Plan, make the election permitted under Section 83(b) of the Code, such Participant shall notify the Company of such election within ten (10) days after filing notice of the election with the Internal Revenue Service.

Section 24. No Fractional Shares.

No fractional shares of Common Stock shall be issued or delivered pursuant to the Plan. The Administrator shall determine whether cash, other Awards, or other property shall be issued or paid in lieu of such fractional shares or whether such fractional shares or any rights thereto shall be forfeited or otherwise eliminated.

Section 25. Beneficiary.

A Participant may file with the Administrator a written designation of a beneficiary on such form as may be prescribed by the Administrator and may, from time to time, amend or revoke such designation. If no designated beneficiary survives the Participant, the executor or administrator of the Participant's estate shall be deemed to be the Participant's beneficiary.

Section 26. Paperless Administration.

In the event that the Company establishes, for itself or using the services of a third party, an automated system for the documentation, granting or exercise of Awards, such as a system using an internet website or interactive voice response, then the paperless documentation, granting or exercise of Awards by a Participant may be permitted through the use of such an automated system.

Section 27. Severability.

If any provision of the Plan is held to be invalid or unenforceable, the other provisions of the Plan shall not be affected but shall be applied as if the invalid or unenforceable provision had not been included in the Plan.

Section 28. Clawback.

(a) If the Company is required to prepare a financial restatement due to the material non-compliance of the Company with any financial reporting requirement, then the Committee may require any Section 16 Officer to repay or forfeit to the Company, and each Section 16 Officer agrees to so repay or forfeit, that part of the Incentive Compensation received by that Section 16 Officer during the three-year period preceding the publication of the restated financial statement that the Committee determines was in excess of the amount that such Section 16 Officer would have received had such Incentive Compensation been calculated based on the financial results reported in the restated financial statement. The Committee may take into account any factors it deems reasonable in determining whether to seek recoupment of previously paid Incentive Compensation and how much Incentive Compensation to recoup from each Section 16 Officer (which need not be the same amount or proportion for each Section 16 Officer), including any determination by the Committee that a Section 16 Officer engaged in fraud, willful misconduct or committed grossly negligent acts or omissions which materially contributed to the events that led to the financial restatement. The amount and form of the Incentive Compensation to be recouped shall be determined by the Committee in its sole and absolute discretion, and recoupment of Incentive Compensation may be made, in the Committee's sole and absolute discretion, through the cancellation of vested or unvested Awards, cash repayment or both.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provisions in this Plan, any Award which is subject to recovery under any Applicable Laws, government regulation or stock exchange listing requirement, will be subject to such deductions and clawback as may be required to be made pursuant to such Applicable Law, government regulation or stock exchange listing requirement (or any policy adopted by the Company pursuant to any such law, government regulation or stock exchange listing requirement).

Section 29. Governing Law.

The Plan shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the State of Delaware, without giving effect to principles of conflicts of law of such state.

Section 30. Indemnification.

To the extent allowable pursuant to applicable law, each member of the Board and the Administrator and any officer or other employee to whom authority to administer any component of the Plan is delegated shall be indemnified and held harmless by the Company from any loss, cost, liability, or expense that may be imposed upon or reasonably incurred by such member in connection with or resulting from any claim, action, suit, or proceeding to which he or she may be a party or in which he or she may be involved by reason of any action or failure to act pursuant to the Plan and against and from any and all amounts paid by him or her in satisfaction of judgment in such action, suit, or proceeding against him or her; provided, however, that he or she gives the Company an opportunity, at its own expense, to handle and defend the same before he or she undertakes to handle and defend it on his or her own behalf. The foregoing right of indemnification shall not be exclusive of any other rights of indemnification to which such individuals may be entitled pursuant to the Company's Certificate of Incorporation or Bylaws, as a matter of law, or otherwise, or any power that the Company may have to indemnify them or hold them harmless.

Section 31. Titles and Headings, References to Sections of the Code or Exchange Act.

The titles and headings of the sections in the Plan are for convenience of reference only and, in the event of any conflict, the text of the Plan, rather than such titles or headings, shall control. References to sections of the Code or the Exchange Act shall include any amendment or successor thereto.

Section 32. Successors.

The obligations of the Company under the Plan shall be binding upon any successor corporation or organization resulting from the merger, consolidation or other reorganization of the Company, or upon any successor corporation or organization succeeding to substantially all of the assets and business of the Company.

Section 33. Relationship to other Benefits.

No payment pursuant to the Plan shall be taken into account in determining any benefits under any pension, retirement, savings, profit sharing, group insurance, welfare, or other benefit plan of the Company or any Affiliate except to the extent otherwise expressly provided in writing in such other plan or an agreement thereunder.

August 6, 2018

El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc. 3535 Harbor Blvd., Suite 100 Costa Mesa, California 92626

Re: El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc. <u>Registration Statement on Form S-8</u>

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We have acted as special counsel to El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc., a Delaware corporation (the "<u>Company</u>"), in connection with the Registration Statement on Form S-8 (the "<u>Registration Statement</u>") filed by the Company with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "<u>Commission</u>") under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "<u>Securities Act</u>"), on the date hereof, relating to the registration of up to 1,250,000 shares (the "<u>Plan</u> <u>Shares</u>") of the Company's common stock, par value \$0.01 per share (the "<u>Common Stock</u>"), issuable pursuant to the El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc. 2018 Omnibus Equity Incentive Plan (the "Plan").

This opinion is being furnished at the request of the Company in accordance with the requirements of Item 601(b)(5) of Regulation S-K under the Securities Act.

In rendering the opinion stated herein, we have examined and relied upon the following:

(a) the Registration Statement in the form to be filed with the Commission on the date hereof;

El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc. August 6, 2018 Page 2

(b) the Plan;

(c) an executed copy of a certificate of Edith R. Austin, Corporate Secretary of the Company, dated the date hereof (the "Secretary's Certificate");

(d) a copy of the Company's Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation, certified by the Secretary of State of the State of Delaware as of August 6, 2018 and certified pursuant to the Secretary's Certificate;

(e) a copy of the Company's Amended and Restated By-Laws, as amended and in effect as of the date hereof and certified pursuant to the Secretary's Certificate; and

(f) copies of certain resolutions of the Board of Directors of the Company adopted on April 21, 2018 and August 6, 2018, and the approval of the stockholders of the Company adopted on June 5, 2018 at the annual meeting of the Company, each certified pursuant to the Secretary's Certificate.

We have also examined originals or copies, certified or otherwise identified to our satisfaction, of such records of the Company and such agreements, certificates and receipts of public officials, certificates of officers or other representatives of the Company and others, and such other documents as we have deemed necessary or appropriate as a basis for the opinion stated below including the facts and conclusions set forth in the Secretary's Certificate.

In our examination, we have assumed the genuineness of all signatures, including endorsements, the legal capacity and competency of all natural persons, the authenticity of all documents submitted to us as originals, the conformity to original documents of all documents submitted to us as facsimile, electronic, certified or photostatic copies, and the authenticity of the originals of such copies. In making our examination of executed documents, we have assumed that the parties thereto, other than the Company, had the power, corporate or other, to enter into and perform all obligations thereunder and have also assumed the due authorization by all requisite action, corporate or other, and the execution and delivery by such parties of such documents and the validity and binding effect thereof on such parties. As to any facts relevant to the opinion stated herein that we did not independently establish or verify, we have relied upon statements and representations of officers and other representatives of the Company and others and of public officials.

In rendering the opinion stated herein, we have also assumed that (i) an appropriate account statement evidencing Plan Shares credited to a recipient's account maintained with the Company's transfer agent has been or will be issued by the Company's transfer agent, (ii) the issuance of Plan Shares will be properly recorded in the books and records of the Company and (iii) each award agreement under which options, restricted stock, restricted stock units or other awards are granted pursuant to the Plan will be consistent with the Plan and will be duly authorized, executed and delivered by the parties thereto.

El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc. August 6, 2018 Page 3

We do not express any opinion with respect to the laws of any jurisdiction other than the General Corporation Law of the State of Delaware (the "<u>DGCL</u>").

Based upon the foregoing and subject to the qualifications and assumptions stated herein, we are of the opinion that the Plan Shares have been duly authorized by all requisite corporate action on the part of the Company under the DGCL and when the Plan Shares are issued to the participants in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Plan and the applicable award agreement for consideration in an amount at least equal to the par value of such Plan Shares, the Plan Shares will be validly issued, fully paid and nonassessable.

We hereby consent to the filing of this opinion with the Commission as an exhibit to the Registration Statement. In giving this consent, we do not thereby admit that we are included in the category of persons whose consent is required under Section 7 of the Securities Act or the General Rules and Regulations under the Securities Act.

This opinion is expressed as of the date hereof unless otherwise expressly stated, and we disclaim any undertaking to advise you of any subsequent changes in the facts stated or assumed herein or of any subsequent changes in applicable laws.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

ALN

El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc. Costa Mesa, California

We hereby consent to the incorporation by reference in the Prospectus constituting a part of this Registration Statement of our report dated March 9, 2018, relating to the consolidated financial statements of El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc. ("Company") appearing in the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 27, 2017.

/s/ BDO USA, LLP Costa Mesa, CA

August 6, 2018