



El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc. Announces \$40 Million Share Repurchase Authorization

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COSTA MESA, Calif., May 28, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc. ("El Pollo Loco" or the "Company") (Nasdaq: LOCO), the nation's leading fire-grilled chicken restaurant chain, today announced that its Board of Directors has authorized the Company to repurchase up to \$40 million of its common stock, representing ~9% of the Company's current market capitalization.

"Our Board's approval of a new share repurchase program reflects our strong balance sheet, with less than one times leverage, and confidence in our future outlook as we accelerate our unit growth cadence and, by extension, our EBITDA growth in the coming years," said Liz Williams, Chief Executive Officer. "Due to the strong cash flow generation of our business model, we have the financial flexibility to invest in organic growth, our top capital allocation priority, while simultaneously returning cash to shareholders through share repurchases to enhance long-term shareholder value."

The share repurchase program is effective immediately, does not have a fixed expiration date, does not obligate El Pollo Loco to repurchase any specific number of shares and may be expanded, modified, suspended or discontinued at any time. It permits shares to be repurchased from time to time at management's discretion through a variety of methods, including open market purchases, block trades, privately negotiated transactions, transactions pursuant to a 10b5-1 trading plan, or transactions otherwise in compliance with Rule 10b-18 under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. The timing and number of shares repurchased will depend on a variety of factors, including price, general business, economic and market conditions, alternative investment opportunities, and funding considerations. The Company intends to fund the repurchases with existing cash, future cash flow from operations, future borrowings, or other sources of cash at the Company's discretion.

About El Pollo Loco

El Pollo Loco (Nasdaq: LOCO) is the nation's leading fire-grilled chicken restaurant known for its craveable, flavorful, and better-for-you offerings. Our menu features innovative meals with Mexican flavors all made in our restaurants daily using quality ingredients. At El Pollo Loco, inclusivity is at the heart of our culture. Our community of over 4,000 employees reflects our commitment to creating a workplace where everyone has a seat at our table. Since 1980, El Pollo Loco has successfully expanded its presence, operating more than 500 company-owned and franchise-operated restaurants across nine U.S. states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Utah and Washington. The Company has also extended its footprint internationally, with eight licensed restaurant locations in the Philippines. For more information or to place an order, visit the Loco Rewards APP or ElPolloLoco.com. Follow us on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, or X.

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Forward-Looking Statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements that are subject to risks and uncertainties. All statements other than statements of historical fact included in this press release are forward-looking statements. Examples of forward-looking statements in this report include, but are not limited to, discussions of our current expectations, projections, intentions, or beliefs relating to our financial condition, results of operations, liquidity, prospects, growth, trends, strategies, the industry in which we operate, and our share repurchase plans. You can identify forward-looking statements because they do not relate strictly to historical or current facts. These statements may include words such as "aim," "anticipate," "believe," "estimate," "expect," "forecast," "outlook," "potential," "project," "projection," "plan," "intend," "seek," "may," "could," "would," "will," "should," "can," "can have," "likely," the negatives thereof and other words and terms of similar meaning in connection with any discussion of the timing or nature of future operating or financial performance or other events. All forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those that we expected.

While we believe that our assumptions are reasonable, we caution that it is very difficult to predict the impact of known factors, and it is impossible for us to anticipate all factors that could affect our actual results. All forward-looking statements are expressly qualified in their entirety by these cautionary statements. You should evaluate all forward-looking statements made in this press release in the context of the risks and uncertainties that could cause outcomes to differ materially from our expectations. These factors include, but are not limited to: our ability to open new restaurants in new and existing markets; our ability to compete successfully; global economic or other business conditions, including trade policies, tariff and import regulations by the United States, as well as consumer preferences; our ability to attract, develop, assimilate, and retain employees; our vulnerability to regional geographic conditions; our ability to maintain business continuity in the event of a disaster or disruption; impairment of our assets; changes in food and supply costs, especially for chicken, labor, construction and utilities; the impacts public health crises; potential negative publicity; our ability to

continue to expand our digital business, delivery orders and catering; concerns about food safety and quality and about food-borne illness; dependence on frequent and timely deliveries of food and supplies; our ability to service our level of indebtedness; the success of our marketing programs, new menu items, advertising campaigns and restaurant designs and remodels; risks related to our dependence on our franchisees, including their vulnerability to economic changes; exposure from our self-insurance programs; obligations under long-term and non-cancelable leases, and our ability to renew leases at the end of their terms; our ability to achieve our corporate responsibility goals; information technology system failures, cybersecurity breaches, or failure to protect our customers' data or personal information; our ability to enforce and maintain our intellectual property; the impact of federal, state and local laws, including those governing our relationships with our employees fluctuations in our quarterly operating results due to seasonality and other factors; any future offerings of debt or equity securities that may impact the market price of our common stock or dilute existing shareholders' ownership; the possibility that Delaware law, our organizational documents, our shareholder rights agreement, and our existing and future debt agreements may impede or discourage a takeover; the impact of shareholder activism on our expenses, business and stock price; and other risks set forth in our filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) from time to time, including under Item 1A, Risk Factors in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2025, as such risk factors may be amended, supplemented or superseded from time to time by other reports we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission, all of which are or will be available online at www.sec.gov.

We caution you that the important factors referenced above may not contain all of the factors that are important to you. In addition, we cannot assure you that we will realize the results or developments we expect or anticipate or, even if substantially realized, that they will result in the consequences we anticipate or affect us or our operations in the ways that we expect. The forward-looking statements included in this press release are made only as of the date hereof. We undertake no obligation to publicly update or revise any forward-looking statement as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, except as required by law. If we do update one or more forward-looking statements, no inference should be made that we will make additional updates with respect to those or other forward-looking statements. We qualify all of our forward-looking statements by these cautionary statements.



Source: El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc.