

United States District Court  
Northern District of California

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

MARTIN SCHNEIDER, et al.,  
Plaintiffs,  
v.  
CHIPOTLE MEXICAN GRILL, INC.,  
Defendant.

Case No. 16-cv-02200-HSG

**ORDER GRANTING PLAINTIFFS’  
MOTION FOR RECONSIDERATION,  
DENYING DEFENDANT’S MOTION  
FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT,  
GRANTING PLAINTIFFS’ MOTION  
FOR CLASS CERTIFICATION, AND  
DENYING PLAINTIFFS’ AND  
DEFENDANT’S DAUBERT MOTIONS**

Re: Dkt. Nos. 87, 92, 95, 100, 101, 117

Pending before the Court are: (1) Plaintiffs’ unopposed motion for reconsideration, Dkt. No. 87; (2) Defendant’s motion for summary judgment, Dkt. No. 92; (3) Plaintiffs’ motion for class certification, Dkt. No. 95; (4) Defendant’s motion to exclude the expert report and testimony of Colin B. Weir, Dkt. No. 100; (5) Defendant’s motion to exclude the expert report and testimony of Dr. Jon A. Krosnick, Dkt. No. 101; and (6) Plaintiffs’ motion to exclude testimony of Defendant’s experts Dr. Margaret Mellon, Ms. Sarah Butler, and Dr. Russell Mangum, Dkt. No. 117. For the following reasons, the Court **GRANTS** the motion for reconsideration, **DENIES** Defendant’s motion for summary judgment, **GRANTS** the motion for class certification, and **DENIES** both parties’ Daubert motions.

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Plaintiffs Martin Schneider, Sarah Deigert, Theresa Gamage, and Nadia Parikka bring this putative class action against Chipotle Mexican Grill, Inc. (“Chipotle”), alleging that Chipotle’s claims that its products were “non-GMO” and “GMO-free” violated California, Maryland, and New York consumer protection laws. Plaintiffs currently identify representations on three in-store

1 signs displayed during the class period, which state, respectively, (1) “[w]hen it comes to our food,  
 2 genetically modified ingredients don’t make the cut,” Dkt. No. 92-34; (2) “all of our food is non-  
 3 GMO,” Dkt. No. 92-21, and; (3) “only non-GMO ingredients,” Dkt. No. 92-35. *See* Dkt. No. 131  
 4 at 12:21–24. Specifically, Plaintiffs allege that Defendant’s advertising and labeling was  
 5 misleading and deceptive because consumers reasonably understood these representations to mean  
 6 “that Chipotle does not serve food sourced from animals that have been raised on GMOs or  
 7 genetically engineered feed.” *See* Dkt. No. 1 (“Compl.”) ¶¶ 2, 19–26; Dkt. No. 111 at 8.  
 8 However, Plaintiffs allege that Defendant serves “protein products such as beef, chicken, and pork  
 9 from poultry and livestock” raised on GMO feed, “dairy products such as cheese and sour cream”  
 10 produced by milk from such animals, and beverages made with corn-syrup from GMO corn. *Id.*

## 11 **II. MOTION FOR RECONSIDERATION**

### 12 **A. Legal Standard**

13 A “court may relieve a party or its legal representative from a final judgment, order, or  
 14 proceeding for . . . any . . . reason that justifies relief.” Fed. R. Civ. Pro. 60(b)(6).

15 Reconsideration is appropriate if . . . there is an intervening change in controlling law.” *Sch. Dist.*  
 16 *No. 1J, Multnomah Cty., Or. v. ACandS, Inc.*, 5 F.3d 1255, 1263 (9th Cir. 1993). A motion for  
 17 reconsideration should be granted “in the face of the existence of new evidence, *an intervening*  
 18 *change in the law*, or as necessary to prevent manifest injustice.” *Navajo Nation v. Confederated*  
 19 *Tribes & Bands of the Yakama Indian Nation*, 331 F.3d 1041, 1046 (9th Cir. 2003) (emphasis  
 20 added); *see also* Civil Local Rule 7-9(b).

### 21 **B. Discussion**

22 On November 4, 2016, the Court granted Defendant’s motion to dismiss Plaintiffs claims  
 23 for injunctive relief for lack of standing. Dkt. No. 36 at 4. Following the Court’s order on  
 24 Defendant’s motion to dismiss, the Ninth Circuit issued its opinion in *Davidson v. Kimberly-Clark*  
 25 *Corp.*, 873 F.3d 1103 (9th Cir. 2017), resolving the district court split regarding whether  
 26 injunctive relief is available to previously deceived consumers in false advertising cases. That  
 27 decision was amended and superseded by *Davidson v Kimberly-Clark Corp.*, 889 F.3d 956 (9th  
 28 Cir. May 9, 2018).

1            *Davidson* involved the advertising and sale of pre-moistened wipes that the plaintiff  
2 alleged were falsely marketed as “flushable.” *Davidson*, 889 F.3d at 961. The Ninth Circuit  
3 reasoned that some set of circumstances may exist where injunctive relief is available to a  
4 consumer who learns that a label is false after purchasing a product. *Id.* at 967–972. It held that  
5 “a previously deceived consumer may have standing to seek an injunction against false advertising  
6 or labeling, even though the consumer now knows or suspects that the advertising was false at the  
7 time of the original purchase, because the consumer may suffer an actual and imminent, not  
8 conjectural or hypothetical threat of future harm.” *Id.* at 969 (citation and internal quotation marks  
9 omitted). But the court cautioned that mere knowledge of a label’s falsity in the past “does not  
10 equate to knowledge that it will remain false in the future.” *Id.* Instead, a plaintiff seeking  
11 injunctive relief may show, for example, that “she will be unable to rely on the product’s  
12 advertising or labeling in the future, and so will not purchase the product although she would like  
13 to.” *Id.* at 970. “In other cases, the threat of future harm may be the consumer’s plausible  
14 allegations that she might purchase the product in the future, despite the fact it was once marred by  
15 false advertising or labeling, as she may reasonably, but incorrectly, assume the product was  
16 improved.” *Id.* Importantly, the Ninth Circuit’s conclusion is narrower than a blanket conclusion  
17 that plaintiffs seeking injunctive relief in mislabeling class actions always have standing. The  
18 principle set forth in *Davidson* is more accurately cast as the court’s “not [being] persuaded that  
19 injunctive relief is *never* available for a consumer who learns after purchasing a product that the  
20 label is false.” *Id.* (quoting *Duran v. Creek*, No. 3:15-cv-05497-LB, 2016 WL 1191685, at \*7  
21 (N.D. Cal. Mar. 28, 2016)) (emphasis in original).

22            In light of *Davidson*, the Court finds that Plaintiffs’ allegations, *see* Compl. ¶¶ 50–55, are  
23 sufficient on their face to allege standing to seek injunctive relief. The Complaint alleges that  
24 Plaintiff Schneider “maintains an interest in continuing as a customer at Chipotle in the future if  
25 Chipotle eventually does have a non-GMO and GMO-free menu,” and that Plaintiffs Deigert,  
26 Gamage, and Parikka all “maintain[] an interest” in purchasing food at Chipotle in the future.  
27 Compl. ¶¶ 50–55. Under *Davidson*, this is a sufficient basis to find standing under Rule 23(b)(2).

28            Accordingly, the Court **GRANTS** Plaintiffs’ motion for reconsideration. The Court

1 **AMENDS** its previous ruling, and **DENIES** Defendants' motion to dismiss Plaintiffs' claims for  
2 injunctive relief. Because Plaintiffs did not file an amended complaint following the Court's  
3 November 4, 2016 order and both parties have briefed the injunctive relief issues in their summary  
4 judgment and class certification papers, Plaintiffs need not file any amended complaint at this  
5 time.

### 6 **III. MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT**

7 Defendant moves for summary judgment on all of Plaintiffs' claims, contending that there  
8 is no dispute of material fact that: (1) Plaintiffs were not deceived or harmed as a result of  
9 Chipotle's "non-GMO" claims; (2) no reasonable consumer would be deceived by the "non-  
10 GMO" claims, and (3) no consumers paid a price premium due to the "non-GMO" claims. Dkt.  
11 No. 92. For the following reasons, the Court **DENIES** Defendant's motion for summary  
12 judgment.

#### 13 **A. Summary Judgment Standard**

14 Summary judgment is proper when a "movant shows that there is no genuine dispute as to  
15 any material fact and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law." Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(a).  
16 A fact is "material" if it "might affect the outcome of the suit under the governing law." *Anderson*  
17 *v. Liberty Lobby, Inc.*, 477 U.S. 242, 248 (1986). A dispute is "genuine" if there is evidence in the  
18 record sufficient for a reasonable trier of fact to decide in favor of the nonmoving party. *Id.* The  
19 Court views the inferences reasonably drawn from the materials in the record in the light most  
20 favorable to the nonmoving party, *Matsushita Elec. Indus. Co. v. Zenith Radio Corp.*, 475 U.S.  
21 574, 587–88 (1986), and "may not weigh the evidence or make credibility determinations,"  
22 *Freeman v. Arpaio*, 125 F.3d 732, 735 (9th Cir. 1997), *overruled on other grounds by Shakur v.*  
23 *Schriro*, 514 F.3d 878, 884–85 (9th Cir. 2008).

24 The moving party bears both the ultimate burden of persuasion and the initial burden of  
25 producing those portions of the pleadings, discovery, and affidavits that show the absence of a  
26 genuine issue of material fact. *Celotex Corp. v. Catrett*, 477 U.S. 317, 323 (1986). Where the  
27 moving party will not bear the burden of proof on an issue at trial, it "must either produce  
28 evidence negating an essential element of the nonmoving party's claim or defense or show that the

1 nonmoving party does not have enough evidence of an essential element to carry its ultimate  
2 burden of persuasion at trial.” *Nissan Fire & Marine Ins. Co. v. Fritz Cos.*, 210 F.3d 1099, 1102  
3 (9th Cir. 2000). Where the moving party will bear the burden of proof on an issue at trial, it must  
4 also show that no reasonable trier of fact could not find in its favor. *Celotex Corp.*, 477 U.S. at  
5 325. In either case, the movant “may not require the nonmoving party to produce evidence  
6 supporting its claim or defense simply by saying that the nonmoving party has no such evidence.”  
7 *Nissan Fire & Marine Ins. Co.*, 210 F.3d at 1105. “If a moving party fails to carry its initial  
8 burden of production, the nonmoving party has no obligation to produce anything, even if the  
9 nonmoving party would have the ultimate burden of persuasion at trial.” *Id.* at 1102–03.

10 “If, however, a moving party carries its burden of production, the nonmoving party must  
11 produce evidence to support its claim or defense.” *Id.* at 1103. In doing so, the nonmoving party  
12 “must do more than simply show that there is some metaphysical doubt as to the material facts.”  
13 *Matsushita Elec. Indus. Co.*, 475 U.S. at 586. A nonmoving party must also “identify with  
14 reasonable particularity the evidence that precludes summary judgment.” *Keenan v. Allan*, 91  
15 F.3d 1275, 1279 (9th Cir. 1996). If a nonmoving party fails to produce evidence that supports its  
16 claim or defense, courts enter summary judgment in favor of the movant. *Celotex Corp.*, 477 U.S.  
17 at 323.

## 18 **B. Discussion**

### 19 **i. Standing**

20 Defendant contends that Plaintiffs cannot establish Article III standing because there is no  
21 issue of material fact that Plaintiffs were neither deceived nor harmed by the “non-GMO” claims.  
22 Dkt. No. 92 at 13–16. Defendant additionally contends that Plaintiffs lack standing to pursue  
23 injunctive relief because Chipotle has removed the advertisements at issue. *Id.* at 16–17. The  
24 Court addresses each argument in turn.

#### 25 **a. Legal Standard**

26 To establish Article III standing, a plaintiff must show an injury-in-fact that is: (1) concrete  
27 and particularized, as well as actual or imminent; (2) fairly traceable to the challenged action of  
28 the defendant; and (3) redressable by a favorable ruling from the court. *Lujan v. Defenders of*

1 *Wildlife*, 504 U.S. 555, 560-61 (1992). “A plaintiff must demonstrate standing for each claim he  
2 or she seeks to press and for each form of relief sought.” *Wash. Envtl. Council v. Bellon*, 732 F.3d  
3 1131, 1139 (9th Cir. 2013). “In food-labeling cases such as this one, a plaintiff can satisfy the  
4 Article III injury-in-fact requirement by showing that she either: (1) paid a price premium for a  
5 mislabeled product; or (2) would not have purchased the product had he or she known about the  
6 misbranding.” *Nguyen v. Medora Holdings, LLC*, No. 5:14-cv-00618-PSG, 2015 WL 4932836, at  
7 \*5 (N.D. Cal. Aug. 18, 2015) (citations omitted); *see also Mazza v. Am. Honda Motor Co., Inc.*,  
8 666 F.3d 581, 595 (9th Cir. 2012) (stating that, in class action alleging UCL, FAL, and CLRA  
9 claims, “[t]o the extent that class members were relieved of their money by [Defendant’s]  
10 deceptive conduct . . . they have suffered an ‘injury in fact’”) (citation omitted).

11 b. Deception

12 Defendant contends that (1) Plaintiffs Deigert, Gamage, and Parikka were motivated to  
13 purchase Chipotle products because they were preexisting customers; (2) Plaintiffs Deigert,  
14 Gamage, and Schneider cannot have been deceived about GMO content in soft drinks because  
15 they have never purchased soft drinks at Chipotle; and, (3) all Plaintiffs believe that they were  
16 misled only because they hold the false belief that the meat and dairy ingredients are or contain  
17 GMOs. Dkt. No. 92 at 13–14.

18 None of these arguments defeats Plaintiffs’ standing. Plaintiffs concede that only Plaintiff  
19 Parikka has standing to assert reliance with respect to soft drinks. Dkt. No. 104 at 10 n.7. A  
20 genuine issue of material fact remains as to whether Named Plaintiffs would have purchased the  
21 products at issue had they known about the alleged misbranding, regardless of their motivation to  
22 purchase before the “non-GMO” representations appeared or after the in-store campaign  
23 concluded. Further, Defendant’s argument that certain Named Plaintiffs may have understood the  
24 term “non-GMO” to mean that the meat and dairy products are not, and do not contain, GMOs is  
25 inapposite. *See* Dkt. No. 92 at 14–15. Plaintiffs’ contention that the term “non-GMO” *also* means  
26 meat and dairy products from animals who have not consumed GMO feed is not inconsistent with  
27 the Named Plaintiffs’ understanding, and the Named Plaintiffs’ testimony therefore does not  
28 preclude them from holding both beliefs. The cases Defendant cites do not hold otherwise. *See*

1 *Wilson v. Frito-Lay N. Am., Inc.*, 260 F. Supp. 3d 1202, 1215 (N.D. Cal. 2017) (granting summary  
2 judgment in part because Plaintiff “testified at his deposition that he did not rely on the ‘all  
3 natural’ label when making his purchasing decision”); *Major v. Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc.*,  
4 No. 5:12-CV-03067-EJD, 2015 WL 859491, at \*3 (N.D. Cal. Feb. 26, 2015), *aff’d*, 690 F. App’x  
5 564 (9th Cir. 2017) (granting summary judgment where Plaintiff admitted she did not rely to her  
6 detriment on the theory of deception proffered in the complaint). Here, taking the evidence in the  
7 light most favorable to the nonmovants, no Plaintiff has disavowed the Plaintiffs’ proffered  
8 misrepresentation theory.

9 Plaintiffs have offered sufficient evidence to create a disputed issue of material fact that  
10 Named Plaintiffs would not have purchased the Chipotle meat and/or dairy products were it not  
11 for the allegedly misleading branding. *See, e.g.*, Dkt. No. 95-19 ¶ 7 (Deigert Declaration stating  
12 that she continued frequenting Chipotle in part because she “trusted that its representations were  
13 truthful”); Dkt. No. 95-21 ¶ 7 (Gamage Declaration stating that she began frequenting Chipotle  
14 more often after the representations were made, and believed that the products were “not tainted  
15 by GMOs”); Dkt. No. 95-22 ¶ 7 (Parikka Declaration stating that she “rel[ied] on Chipotle’s Non-  
16 GMO signage” when making her purchases); Dkt. No. 95-20 ¶ 7 (Schneider Declaration stating  
17 that he began frequenting Chipotle partly because he saw the “non-GMO” signage).

18 c. Harm

19 Defendant additionally contends that (1) Plaintiffs lack standing because they cannot  
20 establish that the food they purchased entitles them to a full refund; and, (2) because Chipotle did  
21 not raise its prices during the Class Period, Plaintiffs cannot establish that they paid a price  
22 premium for the items they bought. Dkt. No. 92 at 15–16. Defendant also contends that Plaintiffs  
23 are not entitled to restitution under California law because any such restitution “must account for  
24 the benefits or value that a plaintiff received at the time of purchase” and “represent a measurable  
25 loss supported by the evidence.” *Id.* at 15 (quoting *Stathakos v. Columbia Sportswear Co.*, No.  
26 15-CV-04543-YGR, 2017 WL 1957063, at \*10 (N.D. Cal. May 11, 2017)).

27 Defendant’s contentions do not establish as a matter of law that Plaintiffs were not harmed  
28 by Defendant’s alleged misrepresentations. Firstly, Defendant’s contention that, because Plaintiffs

1 received “some value from” their purchases they are not entitled to a full refund addresses a  
2 question of damages, not one of standing. Defendant’s only cited cases address this question with  
3 respect to damages and under California law. *Stathakos*, 2017 WL 1957063, at \*10 (granting  
4 summary judgment of no entitlement to a full refund); *Brazil v. Dole Packaged Foods, LLC*, No.  
5 12-CV-01831-LHK, 2014 WL 2466559, at \*15 (N.D. Cal. May 30, 2014) (addressing full refund  
6 model during class certification under 12(b)(3)).

7 Further, under California law, “[f]or each consumer who relies on the truth and accuracy of  
8 a label and is deceived by misrepresentations into making a purchase, the economic harm is the  
9 same: the consumer has purchased a product that he or she *paid more for* than he or she otherwise  
10 might have been willing to pay if the product had been labeled accurately.” *Kwikset Corp. v.*  
11 *Superior Court*, 51 Cal. 4th 310, 329 (2011) (emphasis in original). The fact that the price of the  
12 product did not change after the representation does not establish that there is no triable issue as to  
13 whether Plaintiffs paid a price premium. *See, e.g., McCrary v. Elations Co. LLC*, No.  
14 EDCV130242JGBSPX, 2014 WL 12589137, at \*9 (C.D. Cal. Dec. 2, 2014) (“A price premium  
15 may exist even though, at some point,” the product “was sold at the same price” with and without  
16 the alleged misrepresentation).

17 d. Injunctive Relief

18 The Court has already established that Plaintiffs’ pleadings on their face are sufficient to  
19 allege standing to pursue injunctive relief. *See* Section II, *supra*. The Complaint alleges that  
20 Plaintiff Schneider “maintains an interest in continuing as a customer at Chipotle in the future if  
21 Chipotle eventually does have a non-GMO and GMO-free menu,” and that Plaintiffs Deigert,  
22 Gamage, and Parikka all “maintain[] an interest” in purchasing food at Chipotle in the future.  
23 Compl. ¶¶ 50–55.

24 Defendant contends that Chipotle has “removed from its restaurants each of the ‘Non-  
25 GMO Claims’ allegedly seen by Plaintiffs.” Dkt. No. 92 at 17. However, Defendant does not  
26 contest that similar statements are still made by Chipotle on its website, in its ingredients guide,  
27 and by Chipotle employees in stores, including the claim that “[w]hen it comes to [its] food,  
28 genetically modified ingredients don’t make the cut,” which “has appeared on [Chipotle’s]



1 homepage and continues to be one of the first things consumers see on the GMO Webpage.” Dkt.  
2 No. 120 at 2–3. Defendant contends that, because these statements are (or, in the case of  
3 employee representations, are designed to be) accompanied by an explanation that “much of the  
4 meat and dairy we serve come from animals fed at least some GMO grain,” Plaintiffs are not  
5 likely to be further misled. *Id.* at 2.

6 Defendant cites to *Kane v. Chobani, Inc.*, No. 12-CV-02425-LHK, 2013 WL 5289253  
7 (N.D. Cal. Sept. 19, 2013), in which the court dismissed similar California law claims of  
8 misrepresentation. In *Kane*, the representation at issue appeared on a label that also disclosed  
9 information that clarified the meaning of the representation such that it was “not plausible” for  
10 Plaintiffs to interpret the representation as misleading. *Kane*, 2013 WL 5289253, at \*10.

11 The *Kane* court dismissed California law claims due to lack of standing under the UCL and  
12 FAL, which require a demonstration of actual reliance. *Id.* at \*5. Here, Plaintiffs seek injunctive  
13 relief under California, Maryland, and New York law. Compl. ¶¶ 78, 115, 124. To establish  
14 Article III standing “[w]here standing is premised entirely on the threat of repeated injury, a  
15 plaintiff must show a sufficient likelihood that he will again be wronged in a similar way.”  
16 *Davidson*, 889 F.3d at 967. (internal quotation marks omitted). To establish standing for  
17 injunctive relief, a plaintiff may show, for example, that “she will be unable to rely on the  
18 product’s advertising or labeling in the future, and so will not purchase the product although she  
19 would like to.” *Davidson*, 889 F.3d at 970.

20 Plaintiffs’ current position is that “1) reasonable consumers understood Non-GMO to  
21 include meat and dairy ingredients that were not sourced from animals fed GM feed; 2) Defendant  
22 failed to include that information on its in-store billboards and other marketing materials in a  
23 deceptive manner; and 3) Defendant misrepresented its Non-GMO claims by omitting to include  
24 this clarifying information.” Dkt. No. 111 at 8 (internal footnote omitted); *see also* Compl. ¶ 41;  
25 Dkt. No. 104 at 12 (“Plaintiffs believed that all of Defendant’s ingredients were non-GMO,  
26 meaning that none of the ingredients came from animals that fed on GM feed.”).

27 The disclaimer on Defendant’s website and handbooks does not ensure that Plaintiffs will  
28 be able to rely on Chipotle labeling or advertisements in the future such that Plaintiffs are deprived

1 of standing. *See Davidson*, 889 F.3d at 970.

2 Neither are Plaintiffs' claims for injunctive relief rendered moot simply because Chipotle  
3 has removed the in-store signage. A demonstration of mootness requires that "the reform of the  
4 defendant must be irrefutably demonstrated and total." *Polo Fashions, Inc. v. Dick Bruhn, Inc.*,  
5 793 F.2d 1132, 1135 (9th Cir. 1986). Defendant has not met this high burden by demonstrating  
6 that the alleged misrepresentations have totally and irrefutably ceased. The Court therefore  
7 DENIES Defendant's motion for summary judgment as to Plaintiffs' claims for injunctive relief.

8 **ii. Reasonable Consumer**

9 Defendant contends that that there is no issue of material fact that a reasonable consumer  
10 would not be deceived by Chipotle's "non-GMO" claims. Dkt. No. 92 at 17.

11 **a. Legal Standard**

12 Plaintiffs' claims under California, Maryland, and New York law are evaluated under a  
13 "reasonable consumer" test. *See Williams v. Gerber Prod. Co.*, 552 F.3d 934, 938 (9th Cir. 2008);  
14 *Luskin's, Inc. v. Consumer Prot. Div.*, 353 Md. 335, 357–58 (1999); *Oswego Laborers' Local 214*  
15 *Pension Fund v. Marine Midland Bank, N.A.*, 85 N.Y.2d 20, 26 (1995). "Under the reasonable  
16 consumer standard, [a plaintiff] must show that members of the public are likely to be deceived."  
17 *Williams*, 552 F.3d at 938 (internal quotation marks omitted).

18 **b. Website Disclaimer**

19 Defendant first contends that, because Plaintiffs challenge all of Defendant's "non-GMO"  
20 advertising and marketing claims, the challenged claims necessarily include statements made on  
21 Chipotle's website that, even during the Class Period, included a disclaimer that "the meat and  
22 dairy served at Chipotle are likely to come from animals given at least some GMO feed." Dkt.  
23 No. 92 at 17–18. Defendant cites several cases supporting the proposition that a disclaimer or  
24 clarifying language can defeat a claim of deception. *Id.* at 18 (citing *Ebner v. Fresh, Inc.*, 838  
25 F.3d 958 (9th Cir. 2016); *Freeman v. Time, Inc.*, 68 F.3d 285, 290 (9th Cir. 1995); *Fink v. Time*  
26 *Warner Cable*, 714 F.3d 739, 742 (2d Cir. 2013); *Broder v. MBNA Corp.*, 281 A.D.2d 369, 371,  
27 722 N.Y.S.2d 524 (2001)). But none of the cases Defendant cites establishes that a disclaimer  
28 appearing as part of one advertisement is sufficient to defeat claims that other, wholly separate

1 advertisements are misleading. It would not be reasonable to expect a consumer to search for  
2 disclaimers on a website to clarify a purported misrepresentation on in-store signage. *See*  
3 *Williams*, 552 F.3d at 939 (“[R]easonable consumers should [not] be expected to look beyond  
4 misleading representations on the front of the box to discover the truth from the ingredient list in  
5 small print on the side of the box.”). The Court therefore finds that Defendant’s disclosures on the  
6 website do not establish as a matter of law that a reasonable consumer could not have been misled  
7 by the “non-GMO” in-store advertisements.

8 c. Deception

9 Defendant next contends that Plaintiffs have not presented any evidence that a reasonable  
10 consumer would be deceived by Chipotle’s “non-GMO” claims. Dkt. No. 92 at 18–22. Defendant  
11 contends that, because the in-store advertisements do not specifically address the feed consumed  
12 by the animals that produce Chipotle’s meat and dairy ingredients or the soft drinks offered in the  
13 restaurants, it would not be reasonable for a consumer to be misled by the “non-GMO”  
14 representations. *Id.* at 21.

15 Plaintiffs have provided extrinsic evidence that the “non-GMO” representations at least  
16 could be misleading, making all inferences in their favor as required here. Plaintiffs support their  
17 allegations with definitions used by the Non-GMO Project and the federal government, as well as  
18 market research and surveys into consumers’ interpretations of the phrases. Dkt. Nos. 95-28, 94-  
19 24, 94-26, 94-28, 94-38. Additionally, Plaintiffs point to several emails directed to Chipotle  
20 indicating that at least some customers may have believed the representations to be misleading.  
21 *See* Dkt. No. 94-10, 94-12, 94-14, 94-16, 94-18, 94-20, 94-22. Viewed in the light most favorable  
22 to Plaintiffs, there is a triable issue of fact as to whether a reasonable consumer could find that  
23 Chipotle’s “non-GMO” claims implied that the animals that produce Chipotle’s meat and dairy  
24 ingredients were not fed GMO grain. Plaintiffs’ have submitted sufficient evidence to present a  
25 genuine issue of material fact as to whether Defendant’s representations would have deceived a  
26 reasonable consumer.

27 **iii. Economic Harm**

28 Defendant again contends that there is no genuine issue of material fact that Plaintiffs did

1 not suffer an economic harm because: (1) Chipotle did not change the price of its products during  
2 the Class Period; (2) Plaintiffs' expert report does not appropriately measure the harm Plaintiffs  
3 allege; and (3) Plaintiffs' expert report finds no price premium among a group of all respondents.  
4 Dkt. No. 92 at 23–25. The Court addresses each argument in turn.

5 a. Change in Price

6 The fact that the price of the allegedly mislabeled products did not change during the Class  
7 Period does not by itself demonstrate as a matter of law that Plaintiffs cannot prove economic  
8 harm caused by the misrepresentations. *See Brazil v. Dole Packaged Foods, LLC*, No. 12-CV-  
9 01831-LHK, 2014 WL 5794873, at \*10 (N.D. Cal. Nov. 6, 2014) (noting that producer pricing  
10 does not necessarily correlate with value to the consumer when calculating restitution). Defendant  
11 cites no law in support of its proposition that “Chipotle’s own pricing behavior provides a perfect  
12 before-and-after scenario for observing whether consumers did, in fact, pay a price premium.”  
13 Dkt. No. 92 at 23. Such a test does not take into account economic harm or the potential benefit to  
14 a defendant in increased market share caused by a misrepresentation that induces consumers to  
15 purchase a product they otherwise would not have purchased. *See Kwikset*, 51 Cal. 4th 310, 329.  
16 A reasonable jury could find that, despite no change in price during the Class Period, Plaintiffs  
17 suffered economic harm as a result of Defendant’s alleged misrepresentations.

18 b. Dr. Krosnick’s Methodology

19 The parties agree that the proper measure of restitution in this case is “the difference  
20 between the market price actually paid by consumers and the true market price that reflects the  
21 impact of the unlawful, unfair, or fraudulent business practices.” Dkt. No. 104 at 22; Dkt. No. 120  
22 at 13; *see also Pulaski & Middleman, LLC v. Google, Inc.*, 802 F.3d 979, 989 (9th Cir. 2015)  
23 (“[R]estitution is based on what a purchaser would have paid at the time of purchase had the  
24 purchaser received all the information.”).

25 Defendant contends that Plaintiffs have failed to present any evidence of a difference  
26 between the price paid by consumers and the true market price of the Chipotle products. Dkt. No.  
27 120 at 13. Plaintiffs’ expert Dr. Krosnick offers a report based on a questionnaire comparing the  
28 price respondents would pay for food items after having been presented with the text of Chipotle’s

1 “non-GMO” in-store advertisements against the price respondents would pay after having seen  
2 both the “non-GMO” advertisements and a corrective statement about animals eating GMO feed.  
3 Dkt. No. 92-9 (“Krosnick Report”) ¶¶ 1–15. Defendant contends that, because the report does not  
4 directly measure the difference in a consumer’s willingness to pay with and without the “non-  
5 GMO” representations, it cannot be relied upon as evidence that Plaintiffs paid a price premium.  
6 Dkt. No. 92 at 24.

7 The Court is not persuaded. Dr. Krosnick’s report is relevant to Plaintiffs’ theory that  
8 Chipotle, by displaying “non-GMO” representations, misled consumers into believing that the  
9 meat and dairy products came from animals that did not consume GMO feed. The report therefore  
10 provides extrinsic evidence of some weight that a reasonable consumer would pay less for  
11 Defendant’s products if not for the alleged misrepresentation. Whether or not a jury is likely to  
12 find the evidence persuasive, this is sufficient to present a genuine issue of material fact as to  
13 whether Plaintiffs have suffered economic harm.

14 c. Dr. Krosnick’s Results

15 Defendant notes that Dr. Krosnick’s survey results only show that customers who have  
16 purchased and/or eaten at Chipotle would pay more without the clarifying disclaimer, whereas Dr.  
17 Krosnick’s results for *all* respondents (including those who are not Chipotle customers) indicate  
18 an increased willingness to pay for food when shown the “GMO feed” disclaimer. Dkt. No. 92 at  
19 24–25. Defendant contends that this discrepancy proves that Plaintiffs cannot establish that a  
20 reasonable consumer would have paid more given the corrective statement. *Id.* Defendant cites to  
21 no legal precedent holding that analysis focusing on a defendant’s actual customers cannot be  
22 probative of the economic harm suffered by a reasonable consumer. Though the Court  
23 acknowledges that the import of Dr. Krosnick’s survey results is ambiguous at best, viewing the  
24 report in the light most favorable to the nonmoving party, an issue of material fact remains as to  
25 whether Plaintiffs or a reasonable consumer suffered economic harm as a result of the alleged  
26 misrepresentations.

27 **C. Conclusion**

28 For the foregoing reasons, the Court DENIES Defendant’s motion for summary judgment.

1 **IV. PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR CLASS CERTIFICATION**

2 **A. Background**

3 **i. Class Allegations**

4 Plaintiffs Martin Schneider, Sarah Deigert, Theresa Gamage, and Nadia Parikka seek to  
5 certify three classes of consumers who purchased Defendant's food products between April 27,  
6 2015, and June 30, 2016 (the "Class Period"). Dkt. No. 95 at 1.

7 Plaintiffs bring causes of action under California, Maryland, and New York consumer  
8 protection laws. Plaintiffs seek certification under Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 23(b)(2) and  
9 23(b)(3). More specifically, Plaintiffs allege that they purchased food products manufactured and  
10 sold by Defendant that falsely and misleadingly-advertised as "non-GMO" when, in fact, those  
11 food products contained ingredients that came from animals that fed on genetically modified feed.  
12 Dkt. No. 95 at 1. They accordingly seek to certify three separate classes corresponding to these  
13 violations that include all California, Maryland, and New York consumers who Defendant's  
14 products at any time during the Class Period. The proposed class definitions are as follows:

15 California: All persons in California who purchased Chipotle's  
16 Food Products containing meat and/or dairy ingredients during the  
17 Class Period.

18 Maryland: All persons in Maryland who purchased Chipotle's Food  
19 Products containing meat and/or dairy ingredients during the Class  
20 Period.

21 New York: All persons in New York who purchased Chipotle's  
22 Food Products containing meat and/or dairy ingredients during the  
23 Class Period.

24 *See* Dkt. No. 95 at i.

25 **ii. Procedural Posture**

26 Plaintiffs filed the operative complaint on April 22, 2016. Compl. On November 4, 2016,  
27 the Court granted in part Defendant's motion to dismiss the complaint, narrowing the claims for  
28 which Plaintiffs could seek relief. *See* Dkt. No. 36. Defendant answered the complaint on  
December 1, 2016. Dkt. No. 40.

On November 17, 2017, Plaintiffs filed this motion for class certification. Dkt. No. 95.

1 On December 22, Defendant moved to exclude the testimony of Plaintiffs' expert witnesses. Dkt.  
 2 Nos. 100, 101. Defendant filed its opposition on December 27, 2017, Dkt. No. 106. On January  
 3 19, 2018, Plaintiffs replied. Dkt. No. 121. On January 17, 2018, Plaintiffs filed a motion to  
 4 exclude testimony of Defendant's experts Drs. Mellon, Dr. Mangum, and Ms. Butler. Dkt. No.  
 5 117. The Court heard argument on the class certification motion on February 8, 2018. Dkt. No.  
 6 127.

7 **B. Legal Standard**

8 Plaintiffs bear the burden of showing by a preponderance of the evidence that class  
 9 certification is appropriate under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23. *See Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. v.*  
 10 *Dukes*, 564 U.S. 338, 350-51 (2011). First, the plaintiffs must establish that each of the four  
 11 requirements of Rule 23(a) are met: numerosity, commonality, typicality, and adequacy of  
 12 representation. *Id.* at 349. Where the plaintiffs "succeed[] in establishing all four of the 23(a)  
 13 elements, [they] must then satisfy one of the three requirements of Rule 23(b)." *Civil Rights Educ.*  
 14 *& Enforcement Ctr. v. Hospitality Props. Trust*, 867 F.3d 1093, 1103 (9th Cir. 2017).

15 As relevant here, Rule 23(b)(2) requires that "the party opposing the class has acted or  
 16 refused to act on grounds that apply generally to the class, so that final injunctive relief . . . is  
 17 appropriate respecting the class as a whole." Rule 23(b)(3), on the other hand, requires a finding  
 18 "that the questions of law or fact common to class members predominate over any questions  
 19 affecting only individual members, and that a class action is superior to other available methods  
 20 for fairly and efficiently adjudicating the controversy." To determine whether a putative class  
 21 action satisfies the requirements of Rule 23(b)(3), courts consider:

22 (A) the class members' interests in individually controlling the  
 23 prosecution or defense of separate actions;

24 (B) the extent and nature of any litigation concerning the  
 controversy already begun by or against class members;

25 (C) the desirability or undesirability of concentrating the litigation of  
 26 the claims in the particular forum; and

27 (D) the likely difficulties in managing a class action.

28 Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(b)(3)(A)–(D).

1 While a court’s “class-certification analysis must be rigorous and may entail some overlap  
2 with the merits of the plaintiff’s underlying claim, Rule 23 grants courts no license to engage in  
3 free-ranging merits inquiries at the certification stage.” *Amgen Inc. v. Conn. Ret. Plans & Trust*  
4 *Funds*, 568 U.S. 455, 465-66 (2013) (internal citations and quotation marks omitted). “Merits  
5 questions may be considered to the extent—but only to the extent—that they are relevant to  
6 determining whether the Rule 23 prerequisites for class certification are satisfied.” *Id.* at 466  
7 (citation omitted). A trial court’s “broad discretion to certify a class . . . must be exercised within  
8 the framework of Rule 23.” *Zinser v. Accufix Research Inst., Inc.*, 253 F.3d 1180, 1186 (9th Cir.  
9 2001), *reh’g denied*, 273 F.3d 1266 (9th Cir. 2001) (citation omitted).

10 **C. Discussion**

11 Before considering whether Plaintiffs have satisfied the requirements of Rule 23, the Court  
12 turns to two threshold issues: Plaintiffs’ standing and the parties’ evidentiary objections.

13 **i. Standing**

14 Plaintiffs must show they have standing to bring their claims in order to represent the  
15 putative class. *See Lierboe v. State Farm Mut. Auto. Ins. Co.*, 350 F.3d 1018, 1022 (9th Cir.  
16 2003). Defendant contends that Plaintiffs do not have standing to assert any of their claims  
17 because they have “been neither deceived nor harmed by Chipotle’s ‘non-GMO ingredients’  
18 announcement.” Dkt. No. 106 at 7. Defendant relies solely on the arguments made in their  
19 motion for summary judgment to contest Plaintiffs’ standing. *Id.* The Court has fully addressed  
20 these standing arguments in Section III(B)(i) above, and finds that Plaintiffs have adequately  
21 established standing for all claims.

22 **ii. Evidentiary Objections**

23 Defendant objects to seven email exchanges Plaintiffs offer as evidence (Exs. 7–13) as  
24 inadmissible hearsay. *See* Dkt. No. 106 at 25, 11. The statements in these emails made by  
25 Chipotle employees are non-hearsay party admissions. Fed. R. Evid. 801(d)(2). The statements  
26 made by non-Chipotle employees are admitted not for their underlying truth, but as evidence of  
27 what customers may have believed and communicated to Chipotle. Fed. R. Evid. 801(c)(2).  
28 Defendant additionally objects to Plaintiffs’ exhibits 23–27, 29, and 32–42 without establishing a



1 basis for the objection. These objections made without specific grounds are DENIED. *See* Fed.  
2 R. Evid. 103(a).

3 **iii. Rule 23(a)**

4 Having resolved these threshold issues, the Court next considers whether Plaintiffs have  
5 satisfied the requirements of Rule 23(a).

6 a. Numerosity

7 Rule 23(a)(1) requires that the putative class be “so numerous that joinder of all members  
8 is impracticable.” Plaintiffs contend that the numerosity requirement is satisfied because, based  
9 on the “millions of units” sold by Chipotle, “each of the Classes consists of hundreds of thousands  
10 of consumers.” Dkt. No. 95 at 11. Defendant does not contest that numerosity requirement is  
11 satisfied.

12 “[C]ourts have routinely found the numerosity requirement satisfied when the class  
13 comprises 40 or more members.” *Villalpando v. Exel Direct Inc.*, 303 F.R.D. 588, 605-06 (N.D.  
14 Cal. 2014) (citation omitted). Although Plaintiffs do not provide an exact estimate of how many  
15 proposed class members there are, based on Plaintiffs’ estimation and Chipotle’s sales numbers,  
16 *see* Dkt. No. 95 at 11, the Court is satisfied that the putative class members are sufficiently  
17 numerous to make joinder impracticable within the meaning of Rule 23(a)(1).

18 b. Commonality

19 Rule 23(a)(2) requires that “there are questions of law or fact common to the class.”  
20 Plaintiffs contend that claims of all members of the proposed classes share common questions of  
21 law as to whether Chipotle’s advertising was misleading and likely to deceive a reasonable  
22 consumer, and as to the appropriate measure of relief. Dkt. No. 95 at 12.

23 Defendant points to individualized issues involved in determining which consumers were  
24 exposed to which specific representations (including the disclaimer on the website), which  
25 consumers paid attention to the claims to which they were exposed, which consumers understood  
26 the term “non-GMO” to mean food products that are not sourced from animals that have  
27 consumed GMO feed, which consumers found the “non-GMO” claims to be material, and which  
28 consumers relied on the claims. Dkt. No. 106 at 8–14.

1 Defendant's arguments regarding common exposure, attention, understanding, materiality,  
2 and reliance are inappropriate here at the 23(a)(1) determination. The individualized issues raised  
3 by the question of "*which* buyers saw or heard *which* advertisements . . . go to preponderance  
4 under Rule 23(b)(3), not to whether there are common issues under Rule 23(a)(2)." *Mazza*, 666  
5 F.3d at 589.

6 Further, misrepresentation claims under California, Maryland, and New York law must be  
7 proved based on a "reasonable consumer" standard. *See Williams*, 552 F.3d at 938; *Luskin's, Inc.*,  
8 353 Md. at 357–58; *Oswego Laborers' Local 214 Pension Fund*, 85 N.Y.2d at 26. This reasonable  
9 consumer inquiry encompasses materiality and reliance. *See In re ConAgra Foods, Inc.*, 90 F.  
10 Supp. 3d 919, 983 (C.D. Cal. 2015), *aff'd sub nom. Briseno v. ConAgra Foods, Inc.*, 844 F.3d  
11 1121 (9th Cir. 2017), and *aff'd sub nom. Briseno v. ConAgra Foods, Inc.*, 674 F. App'x 654 (9th  
12 Cir. 2017) ("[A] California class suing under the state's consumer protection statutes need not  
13 show individualized reliance if it can establish the materiality of ConAgra's '100% Natural' label  
14 to a reasonable consumer."); *see also In re Tobacco II Cases*, 46 Cal. 4th 298, 327 (2009) ("A  
15 misrepresentation is judged to be 'material' if 'a reasonable man would attach importance to its  
16 existence or nonexistence in determining his choice of action in the transaction in question.").

17 The Court agrees that the legal issue highlighted by Plaintiffs is appropriate for class  
18 treatment. A contention is sufficiently common where "it is capable of classwide resolution—  
19 which means that determination of its truth or falsity will resolve an issue that is central to the  
20 validity of each one of the claims in one stroke." *Dukes*, 564 U.S at 350. Commonality exists  
21 where "the circumstances of each particular class member vary but retain a common core of  
22 factual or legal issues with the rest of the class." *Parra v. Bashas', Inc.*, 536 F.3d 975, 978–79  
23 (9th Cir. 2008). "What matters to class certification . . . is not the raising of common  
24 'questions'—even in droves—but rather the capacity of a classwide proceeding to generate  
25 common *answers* apt to drive the resolution of the litigation." *Dukes*, 564 U.S at 350 (citation  
26 omitted) (emphasis in original). Because the identified common issues are sufficient for purposes  
27 of commonality, the Court finds this requirement satisfied.

28 c. Typicality

1 Rule 23(a)(3) requires that “the claims or defenses of the representative parties are typical  
2 of the claims or defenses of the class.” Defendant contends that Plaintiffs fail to satisfy the  
3 typicality requirement because: (1) Plaintiffs’ have not specified which of Chipotle’s GMO-related  
4 representations they were exposed to; (2) Named Plaintiffs’ belief that the “non-GMO” claims are  
5 false because animals that eat GMO feed “become, or contain, GMOs” is contrary to the liability  
6 theory presented by Plaintiffs’ counsel; (3) only Plaintiff Schneider relied upon the “non-GMO”  
7 representations when making his purchase; and (4) Named Plaintiffs have stated a desire for a full  
8 refund, which does not match the price premium damages model presented by Plaintiffs’ counsel.  
9 Dkt. No. 106 at 15–16.

10 “The test of typicality is whether other members have the same or similar injury, whether  
11 the action is based on conduct which is not unique to the named plaintiffs, and whether other class  
12 members have been injured by the same course of conduct.” *Hanon v. Dataproducts Corp.*, 976  
13 F.2d 497, 508 (9th Cir. 1992) (internal quotation marks omitted). Under the “permissive  
14 standards” of Rule 23(a)(3), the claims need only be “reasonably co-extensive with those of absent  
15 class members,” rather than “substantially identical.” *Hanlon v. Chrysler Corp.*, 150 F.3d 1011,  
16 1020 (9th Cir. 1998). In other words, typicality is “satisfied when each class member’s claim  
17 arises from the same course of events, and each class member makes similar legal arguments to  
18 prove the defendant’s liability.” *Rodriguez v. Hayes*, 591 F.3d 1105, 1124 (9th Cir. 2010)  
19 (internal quotation marks omitted).

20 None of Defendant’s contentions defeats typicality. The question of exposure, as  
21 addressed above, “go[es] to preponderance under Rule 23(b)(3).” *Mazza*, 666 F.3d at 589. The  
22 Court addressed Defendant’s contention that Plaintiffs’ beliefs are misaligned with Plaintiffs’  
23 theory of liability in Section III(B)(i)(b), above. Named Plaintiffs’ testimony regarding their own  
24 understanding is not inconsistent with Plaintiffs’ theory, and therefore does not, in itself, defeat  
25 typicality.

26 Defendant’s contention that only Plaintiff Schneider relied on the “non-GMO” statements  
27 in making his purchases is not supported by the evidence in the record. *See, e.g.*, Dkt. No. 95-19 ¶  
28 7 (Deigert Declaration stating that she continued frequenting Chipotle in part because she “trusted

1 that its representations were truthful”); Dkt. No. 95-21 ¶ 7 (Gamage Declaration stating that she  
2 began frequenting Chipotle more often based on the representations, and believed that the products  
3 were “not tainted by GMOs”); Dkt. No. 95-22 ¶ 7 (Parikka Declaration stating that she “rel[ie]d  
4 on Chipotle’s Non-GMO signage” when making her purchases); Dkt. No. 95-20 ¶ 7 (Schneider  
5 Declaration stating that he began frequenting Chipotle partly because he saw the “non-GMO”  
6 signage).

7 Finally, Defendant cites no legal basis for its contention that Named Plaintiffs’ statements  
8 in depositions that they desire a full refund prevents their claims from being typical of those of the  
9 class. The class allegations all aver injury based on Defendant’s “non-GMO” claims. For  
10 typicality purposes, this is sufficient, even though Plaintiffs may believe themselves entitled to  
11 damages larger than Plaintiffs currently seek. *See Hopkins v. Stryker Sales Corp.*, No. 5:11-CV-  
12 02786-LHK, 2012 WL 1715091, at \*7 (N.D. Cal. May 14, 2012) (finding that “differences  
13 between [named plaintiffs’] damages and the damages of other putative class members do  
14 not defeat typicality because ‘each of the Plaintiffs’ claims stem from the same allegedly unlawful  
15 policies and practices.’”).

16 d. Adequacy

17 Rule 23(a)(4) requires that the “representative parties will fairly and adequately represent  
18 the interests of the class.”

19 On the question of adequacy, the Court must address two legal questions: (1) whether the  
20 named plaintiffs and their counsel have any conflicts of interest with other putative class members,  
21 and (2) whether the named plaintiffs and their counsel will prosecute the action vigorously on  
22 behalf of the proposed class. *See In re Mego Fin. Corp. Sec. Litig.*, 213 F.3d 454, 462 (9th Cir.  
23 2000). This inquiry “tend[s] to merge” with the commonality and typicality criteria. *Gen. Tel.  
24 Co. of Sw. v. Falcon*, 457 U.S. 147, 158 n.13 (1982). In part, these requirements determine  
25 whether “the named plaintiff’s claim and the class claims are so interrelated that the interests of  
26 the class members will be fairly and adequately protected in their absence.” *Id.*

27 Defendant does not contend that named Plaintiffs and their counsel have any conflicts of  
28 interest, or that they have not prosecuted the action vigorously. Rather, Defendant contends that

1 Plaintiffs’ counsel has acted unethically in a variety of ways. Dkt. No. 106 at 16–17. Defendant  
2 identifies a representation made by Plaintiffs regarding Dr. Krosnick’s expert report, a separate  
3 representation regarding the availability of a witness for deposition, and alleges that Plaintiffs’  
4 counsel “improperly solicited” Plaintiff Parikka. *Id.*

5 “The degree of unethical conduct justifying a finding of inadequacy is high, and often turns  
6 on counsel’s integrity and candor.” *Victorino v. FCA US LLC*, 322 F.R.D. 403, 408 (S.D. Cal.  
7 2017) (internal quotation marks omitted). Here, Defendant’s allegations do not rise to the level  
8 required to find Plaintiffs’ counsel inadequate. Defendant’s contentions are insufficiently  
9 supported to persuade the Court that Plaintiffs made knowing misrepresentations, or that  
10 Plaintiffs’ counsel communicated improperly with Plaintiff Parikka.

11 Defendant additionally contends that the Named Plaintiffs are not adequate class  
12 representatives because they have no role in the case beyond “furnishing their names as plaintiffs.”  
13 Dkt. No. 106 at 18. Defendant repeats its arguments regarding Named Plaintiffs’ understanding of  
14 the term “non-GMO” and damages, and adds that Plaintiffs are indemnified from an attorneys’  
15 fees award against them, and that Plaintiffs’ counsel had begun preparing this litigation before  
16 being retained. *Id.*

17 “To establish adequacy lead plaintiffs need only be familiar with the basis for the suit and  
18 their responsibilities as lead plaintiffs.” *In re Lendingclub Sec. Litig.*, 282 F. Supp. 3d 1171, 1182  
19 (N.D. Cal. 2017). Plaintiffs have engaged in this litigation by answering discovery requests and  
20 providing testimony at deposition. *See* Dkt. No. 121 at 10. Plaintiffs are not required to meet the  
21 high burden presented by Defendant in order to satisfy Rule 23(a)(4).

22 Because the Court is unaware of any conflicts among Plaintiffs and proposed class  
23 members, and finds that Plaintiffs have, to date, vigorously prosecuted the action on behalf of the  
24 alleged classes, the Court is satisfied that Plaintiffs can adequately represent the various classes as  
25 pled.

26 **iv. Rule 23(b)(2)**

27 a. Standing

28 In its opposition to the motion for class certification, Defendant contends that Plaintiffs

1 lack standing to seek injunctive relief under Rule 23(b)(2). Dkt. No. 106 at 19. Defendant  
2 presents the same argument made in its motion for summary judgment. For the same reasons  
3 discussed in Section III(B)(i)(d) above, the Court finds that Plaintiffs have standing to pursue  
4 claims for injunctive relief.

5 b. Discussion

6 “Rule 23(b)(2) applies only when a single injunction . . . would provide relief to each  
7 member of the class.” *Dukes*, 564 U.S. at 360. The “key” to finding a class under Rule 23(b)(2)  
8 “is the indivisible nature of the injunctive or declaratory remedy warranted—the notion that the  
9 conduct is such that it can be enjoined . . . only as to *all* of the class members or as to *none* of  
10 them.” *Id.* (citation and internal quotation marks omitted) (emphasis added). Rule 23(b)(2) “does  
11 not authorize class certification when each individual class member would be entitled to a *different*  
12 injunction . . . against the defendant,” or “to an individualized award of monetary damages.” *Id.* at  
13 360–61 (emphasis in original).

14 Defendant contends that Plaintiffs’ claims for restitution are “predominantly for money  
15 damages,” and therefore improper for 23(b)(2) certification. Dkt. No. 106 at 19–20. Initially,  
16 Plaintiffs purported to seek “all incidental monetary relief” in addition to declaratory and  
17 injunctive relief under 23(b)(2). Dkt. No. 95 at 15. In reply, however, they appear to pursue only  
18 a claim for injunctive relief under Rule 23(b)(2). Dkt. No. 121 at 10–11.

19 Defendant appears to argue that Plaintiffs’ attempt to certify a damages class pursuing  
20 restitution under Rule 23(b)(3) bars certification under Rule 23(b)(2). The Court finds no such bar  
21 to 23(b)(2) certification. *See In re ConAgra Foods, Inc.*, 302 F.R.D. 537, 573 (C.D. Cal. 2014)  
22 (“Ninth Circuit precedent indicates that the court can separately certify an injunctive relief class  
23 and if appropriate, also certify a Rule 23(b)(3) damages class.”).

24 The only remaining question, then, is whether “a single injunction . . . would provide relief  
25 to each member of the class.” *Dukes*, 564 U.S. at 360. Based on the alleged mislabeling, the  
26 Court finds that it would, and grants certification of all four classes under Rule 23(b)(2). The  
27 Court remains mindful, however, that a showing of irrefutable and total cessation of the  
28 challenged conduct prior to a final judgment in this litigation may be grounds for a decertification

1 motion. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(c)(1)(C) (“An order that grants or denies class certification may be  
2 altered or amended before final judgment.”).

3 **v. Rule 23(b)(3)**

4 Plaintiffs also seek certification under Rule 23(b)(3), which requires Plaintiffs to show  
5 predominance and superiority. As detailed below, the Court finds that Plaintiffs have met both  
6 requirements.

7 a. Predominance

8 1. Legal Standard

9 “The predominance inquiry tests whether proposed classes are sufficiently cohesive to  
10 warrant adjudication by representation.” *Tyson Foods, Inc. v. Bouaphakeo*, 136 S. Ct. 1036, 1045  
11 (2016) (internal quotation marks omitted). The Supreme Court has defined an individual question  
12 as “one where members of a proposed class will need to present evidence that varies from member  
13 to member, while a common question is one where the same evidence will suffice for each  
14 member to make a prima facie showing [or] the issue is susceptible to generalized, class-wide  
15 proof.” *Id.* (citation and internal quotation marks omitted; brackets in original). This “inquiry  
16 asks whether the common, aggregation-enabling, issues in the case are more prevalent or  
17 important than the non-common, aggregation-defeating, individual issues.” *Id.* (citation and  
18 internal quotation marks omitted).

19 The Supreme Court has made clear that Rule 23(b)(3)’s predominance requirement is  
20 “even more demanding” than the commonality requirement of Rule 23(a). *See Comcast*, 569 U.S.  
21 at 34 (citing *Amchem Prods., Inc. v. Windsor*, 521 U.S. 591, 623–24 (1997)). Accordingly, the  
22 Court will apply this rigorous standard in determining whether Plaintiffs have shown that  
23 restitution owed is “capable of measurement on a classwide basis.” *See Just Film, Inc. v. Buono*,  
24 847 F.3d 1108, 1120 (9th Cir. 2017).

25 2. Exposure

26 In cases alleging misrepresentation, “common issues predominate when plaintiffs  
27 are exposed to [a] common set of representations about a product.” *Butler v. Porsche Cars N.*  
28 *Am., Inc.*, No. 16-CV-2042-LHK, 2017 WL 1398316, at \*10 (N.D. Cal. Apr. 19, 2017); *see also*

1 *Solomon v. Bell Atl. Corp.*, 777 N.Y.S.2d 50, 55 (2004) (“[C]ertification of a class for purposes of  
2 an action brought under GBL §§ 349 and 350 may be appropriate where the plaintiffs allege that  
3 all members of the class were exposed to the same misrepresentations.”). “[T]he relevant class  
4 must be defined in such a way as to include only members who were exposed to advertising that is  
5 alleged to be materially misleading.” *Mazza*, 666 F.3d at 596.

6 This case does not involve the type of massive advertising campaign that gives rise to a  
7 presumption of exposure to all class members. *See id.* (distinguishing *Tobacco II*, which involved  
8 a “‘decades-long’ tobacco advertising campaign where there was little doubt that almost every  
9 class member had been exposed to defendants’ misleading statements”). Here, the in-store  
10 advertising campaign lasted 430 days, and involved two signs displayed on the in-store menus and  
11 one sign displayed in the outward-facing store window. *See* Dkt. No. 94-7 at 25:12–28:2.  
12 Plaintiffs therefore must show classwide exposure to the misleading statements/omissions.

13 Plaintiffs rely primarily on the advertisements and statements issued and installed in all of  
14 Chipotle’s stores, which include: (1) a sign displayed in the window of all Chipotle locations  
15 between April 27, 2015 and June 15, 2015 reading in relevant part “[w]hen it comes to our food,  
16 genetically modified ingredients don’t make the cut,” Dkt. No. 92-34; (2) a sign displayed on the  
17 in-store menu between April 27, 2015 and June 15, 2015 reading in relevant part “all of our food  
18 is non-GMO,” Dkt. No. 92-21, and; (3) a sign displayed on the in-store menu between June 15,  
19 2015 and June 30, 2016 reading in relevant part “only non-GMO ingredients,” Dkt. No. 92-35.  
20 *See* Dkt. No. 94-7 at 25:12–28:2. Some combination of these signs was present in all Chipotle  
21 restaurants for the entire class period, and every store displayed the in-store menu in use during  
22 the time periods at issue. *See id.*; Dkt. No. 92-21; Dkt. No. 92-35; Dkt. No. 121 at 2. Based on  
23 Plaintiffs’ theory that “reasonable consumers understood Non-GMO to include meat and dairy  
24 ingredients that were not sourced from animals fed GM feed,” Dkt. No. 111 at 8, the Court finds  
25 that the representations made on these three in-store signs are not so disparate as to preclude  
26 cohesion among class members. *Cf. Stearns v. Ticketmaster Corp.*, 655 F.3d 1013, 1020 (9th Cir.  
27 2011).

28 Neither party has offered any evidence or argument that members of the proposed classes



1 could have purchased Chipotle meat and/or dairy products without setting foot inside the  
2 restaurants, and therefore without having been exposed to any of this signage. The Court therefore  
3 concludes that Plaintiffs have sufficiently alleged class-wide exposure.

### 4 3. Damages

5 With respect to the monetary relief sought by a putative class, predominance requires that  
6 “damages are capable of measurement on a classwide basis, in the sense that the whole class  
7 suffered damages traceable to the same injurious course of conduct underlying the plaintiffs’ legal  
8 theory.” *Just Film*, 847 F.3d at 1120 (quoting *Comcast Corp. v. Behrend*, 569 U.S. 27, 34 (2013))  
9 (internal quotation marks omitted); *see also Bruton v. Gerber Prods. Co.*, No. 12-CV-02412-LHK,  
10 2018 WL 1009257, at \*8–12 (N.D. Cal. Feb. 13, 2018) (applying *Comcast*’s damages  
11 predominance requirement to proposed restitution calculation methods); *Jones v. ConAgra Foods,*  
12 *Inc.*, No. C 12-01633 CRB, 2014 WL 2702726, at \*19–23 (N.D. Cal. June 13, 2014) (same). As  
13 such, “a model purporting to serve as evidence of damages in [a] class action must measure only  
14 those damages attributable” to the relevant theory of liability. *Comcast*, 569 U.S. at 35. While a  
15 proffered model “need not be exact” at the class certification stage, it “must be consistent with [the  
16 plaintiff’s] liability case.” *Id.* (citations and internal quotation marks omitted); *see also Cal. v.*  
17 *Infineon Techs. AG*, No. C 06-4333 PJH, 2008 WL 4155665, at \*9 (N.D. Cal. Sept. 5, 2008)  
18 (stating that at class certification stage, court’s role is to “discern only whether plaintiffs have  
19 advanced a *plausible* methodology to demonstrate that . . . injury can be proven on a class-wide  
20 basis”) (emphasis added). Moreover, while predominance is not shown where “[q]uestions of  
21 individual damage calculations . . . inevitably overwhelm questions common to the class,”  
22 *Comcast*, 569 U.S. at 34, the “presence of individualized damages” on its own is insufficient to  
23 defeat class certification, *Just Film*, 847 F.3d at 1120 (quoting *Leyva v. Medline Indus. Inc.*, 716  
24 F.3d 510, 514 (9th Cir. 2013)).

25 Defendant again contends that Dr. Krosnick’s survey does not measure the impact of the  
26 “non-GMO” claims because it instead focuses on the impact of the “non-GMO” claims with and  
27 without a corrective statement. *See* Dkt. No. 106 at 22. The Court previously addressed this  
28 argument in Section III(B)(iii)(b) above. Even though Dr. Krosnick’s survey does not compare a

1 consumer's willingness to pay with and without having seen the allegedly misleading  
2 representations, it does produce some measure of the price differential attributable to the "non-  
3 GMO" statements. It is therefore not inconsistent with Plaintiffs' liability case.

4 Defendant next contends that Dr. Krosnick's report only measures consumers' willingness  
5 to pay without taking into account supply-side factors, and therefore does not determine the  
6 difference "between the market values of the product as advertised and as delivered." Dkt. No.  
7 106 at 23–24. Defendant also contends that Mr. Weir's report, which relies on Dr. Krosnick's  
8 findings, does not correct this issue because Mr. Weir "did nothing more than apply Dr.  
9 Krosnick's willingness-to-pay numbers to Chipotle's sales." *Id.* Defendant cites *In re NJOY, Inc.*  
10 *Consumer Class Action Litig.*, in which the court rejected Plaintiffs' proposed damages model  
11 because it "completely ignore[d] the price for which [defendant] is willing to sell its products,  
12 what other e-cigarette manufacturers say about their products, and the prices at which those  
13 entities are willing to sell their products." *In re NJOY, Inc. Consumer Class Action Litig.*, 120 F.  
14 Supp. 3d 1050, 1120 (C.D. Cal. 2015).

15 Here, Dr. Krosnick's report bases its price options on "actual prices that Chipotle charged  
16 for their food items." Krosnick Report ¶ 46. This is sufficient to tie the measured willingness to  
17 pay to the real-world marketplace in which Chipotle's products are sold. Dr. Krosnick's report,  
18 though subject to myriad challenges on cross-examination, does demonstrate that a price premium  
19 model is "consistent with" Plaintiffs' liability case. *See Comcast*, 569 U.S. at 35.

#### 20 4. Conclusion

21 Because Plaintiffs have demonstrated common exposure to the alleged misrepresentations  
22 and Plaintiffs' damages model is sufficient at this stage to show that damages traceable to the  
23 "non-GMO" claims can be measured in some way on a classwide basis, the Court finds that  
24 common questions of law predominate.

#### 25 b. Superiority

26 The superiority requirement tests whether "a class action is superior to other available  
27 methods for fairly and efficiently adjudicating the controversy." Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(b)(3). The  
28 Court considers four non-exclusive factors: (1) the interest of each class member in individually

1 controlling the prosecution or defense of separate actions; (2) the extent and nature of any  
2 litigation concerning the controversy already commenced by or against the class; (3) the  
3 desirability of concentrating the litigation of the claims in the particular forum; and (4) the  
4 difficulties likely to be encountered in the management of a class action. *Id.* “Where classwide  
5 litigation of common issues will reduce litigation costs and promote greater efficiency, a class  
6 action may be superior to other methods of litigation.” *Valentino v. Carter-Wallace, Inc.*, 97 F.3d.  
7 1227, 1234–35 (9th Cir. 1996).

8 Defendant focuses here on the fourth factor, stating that “Chipotle does not possess records  
9 that would make it easy to identify and notify class members and determine the extent of damages,  
10 if any, that each has suffered.” Dkt. No. 106 at 25.

11 That there may be some difficulty in identifying all class members is not dispositive: the  
12 Ninth Circuit rejected a similar argument that plaintiffs must identify an administratively feasible  
13 way to determine who is in the class in order to satisfy the requirements of Rule 23. *Briseno v.*  
14 *ConAgra Foods, Inc.*, 844 F.3d 1121, 1126 (9th Cir. 2017) (“[T]he language of Rule 23 does not  
15 impose a freestanding administrative feasibility prerequisite to class certification.”). Therefore,  
16 given the weight of the other three factors, the Court finds that class action is the superior method  
17 to adjudicate this matter.

18 Under the Rule 23(b) factors, therefore, the Court is compelled to certify the classes  
19 proposed here.

## 20 **V. DAUBERT MOTIONS**

### 21 **A. Legal Standard**

22 Federal Rule of Evidence 702 allows a qualified expert to testify “in the form of an opinion  
23 or otherwise” where:

- 24
- 25 (a) the expert’s scientific, technical, or other specialized knowledge will help the trier of fact to understand the evidence or to determine a fact in issue;
  - 26 (b) the testimony is based on sufficient facts or data;
  - 27 (c) the testimony is the product of reliable principles and methods; and
  - 28 (d) the expert has reliably applied the principles and methods to the facts of the case.

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Fed. R. Evid. 702.

Expert testimony is admissible under Rule 702 if it is both relevant and reliable. *See Daubert v. Merrell Dow Pharm., Inc.*, 509 U.S. 579, 589 (1993). “[R]elevance means that the evidence will assist the trier of fact to understand or determine a fact in issue.” *Cooper v. Brown*, 510 F.3d 870, 942 (9th Cir. 2007); *see also Primiano v. Cook*, 598 F.3d 558, 564 (9th Cir. 2010) (“The requirement that the opinion testimony assist the trier of fact goes primarily to relevance.”) (internal quotation marks omitted).

Under the reliability requirement, the expert testimony must “ha[ve] a reliable basis in the knowledge and experience of the relevant discipline.” *Primiano*, 598 F.3d at 565. To ensure reliability, the court must “assess the [expert's] reasoning or methodology, using as appropriate such criteria as testability, publication in peer reviewed literature, and general acceptance.” *Id.* at 564. These factors are “helpful, not definitive,” and a court has discretion to decide how to test reliability “based on the particular circumstances of the particular case.” *Id.* (internal quotation marks and footnotes omitted). “When evaluating specialized or technical expert opinion testimony, the relevant reliability concerns may focus upon personal knowledge or experience.” *United States v. Sandoval-Mendoza*, 472 F.3d 645, 655 (9th Cir. 2006).

The inquiry into the admissibility of expert testimony is “a flexible one” where “[s]haky but admissible evidence is to be attacked by cross examination, contrary evidence, and attention to the burden of proof, not exclusion.” *Primiano*, 598 F.3d at 564. “When the methodology is sound, and the evidence relied upon sufficiently related to the case at hand, disputes about the degree of relevance or accuracy (above this minimum threshold) may go to the testimony's weight, but not its admissibility.” *i4i Ltd. P’ship v. Microsoft Corp.*, 598 F.3d 831, 852 (Fed. Cir. 2010). The burden is on the proponent of the expert testimony to show, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the admissibility requirements are satisfied. *Lust By & Through Lust v. Merrell Dow Pharm., Inc.*, 89 F.3d 594, 598 (9th Cir. 1996); *see also* Fed. R. Evid. 702 Advisory Cttee. Notes.

**B. Dr. Krosnick**

1 Defendant moves to exclude Dr. Krosnick's report and testimony as inadmissible under  
2 Federal Rule of Evidence 702. Dkt. No. 101. Defendant raises the same arguments addressed  
3 above in Section III(B)(iii) with respect to the relevance of Dr. Krosnick's report to Plaintiffs'  
4 theory of liability and the applicability of the report's results. The Court need not repeat its  
5 analysis of these issues. For the same reasons discussed in Section III(B)(iii), above, the Court  
6 finds that Dr. Krosnick's report is relevant to the claims at issue.

7 Defendant additionally contends that Dr. Krosnick's report is unreliable because: (1) the  
8 results presented are not statistically significant; (2) the survey failed to question respondents  
9 about the materiality of the "non-GMO" claims; (3) the survey did not account for outside factors  
10 affecting willingness to pay; (4) the survey did not present the "non-GMO" claims in the same  
11 visual context as they appeared in Chipotle stores; and (4) the survey did not present the corrective  
12 statement messaging verbatim from Chipotle's website.

13 Given the established relevance of Dr. Krosnick's report to Plaintiffs' damages theory, all  
14 of Defendant's challenges go to the weight of Dr. Krosnick's opinions, rather than to their  
15 admissibility. *See Clicks Billiards, Inc. v. Sixshooters, Inc.*, 251 F.3d 1252, 1263 (9th Cir. 2001)  
16 (after deeming a survey admissible, "follow-on issues of methodology, survey design, reliability,  
17 the experience and reputation of the expert, critique of conclusions, and the like go to the weight  
18 of the survey rather than its admissibility").

**C. Mr. Weir, Dr. Mellon, Ms. Butler, and Dr. Mangum**

19 Defendant additionally moves to exclude Mr. Weir's testimony as inadmissible under  
20 Federal Rule of Evidence 702. Dkt. No. 100. Plaintiffs move to exclude the testimony and expert  
21 opinions of Dr. Mellon, Ms. Butler, and Dr. Mangum. Dkt. No. 117. Because the Court finds that  
22 the expert opinions of Mr. Weir, Dr. Mellon, Ms. Butler, and Dr. Mangum would not alter the  
23 outcome of the Court's analysis and the Court does not rely on any of these opinions, the Court  
24 DENIES as moot the motions to exclude the testimony of Mr. Weir, Dr. Mellon, Ms. Butler, and  
25 Dr. Mangum. The Court's denial of these motions is made without prejudice to the parties  
26 reasserting these objections in their pretrial filings.  
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United States District Court  
Northern District of California

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**VI. CONCLUSION**

For the foregoing reasons, the Court **GRANTS** Plaintiffs’ motion for reconsideration, **DENIES** Defendant’s motion for summary judgment, **DENIES** Defendant’s motion to exclude the testimony and opinions of Dr. Krosnick, and **DENIES** as **MOOT** Plaintiffs’ and Defendant’s remaining Daubert motions.

The Court finds that all the requirements of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23(a), Rule 23(b)(2), and Rule 23(b)(3) have been met in this case. Accordingly, the Court **GRANTS** Plaintiff’s motion for class certification and certifies the following classes:

California: All persons in California who purchased Chipotle’s Food Products containing meat and/or dairy ingredients during the Class Period.

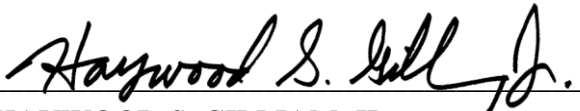
Maryland: All persons in Maryland who purchased Chipotle’s Food Products containing meat and/or dairy ingredients during the Class Period.

New York: All persons in New York who purchased Chipotle’s Food Products containing meat and/or dairy ingredients during the Class Period.

The Court appoints Plaintiffs Martin Schneider, Sarah Deigert, Theresa Gamage, and Nadia Parikka as Class representatives and the law firm of Kaplan Fox as Class Counsel in this action. The Court also **SETS** a further case management conference on October 30 2018, at 2:00 p.m. The parties shall meet and confer and submit a joint case management statement by October 23, 2018. The joint statement should include a proposed case schedule through trial.

**IT IS SO ORDERED.**

Dated:

  
HAYWOOD S. GILLIAM, JR.  
United States District Judge