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Your Monthly Wrap-up of **Mid-market Business Losses**

December 2025

Electricity Provider Agrees to $125 Million Settlement Over Wildfire Smoke Damage—Liability

An Oregon electricity provider has reached a $125 million settlement with 93 Oregon wineries and vineyards that alleged the 2020 wildfires damaged their grapes, impacting their harvest and sales. The wineries and vineyards claimed that the utility provider was negligent for not preemptively shutting down power during the windstorm, which contributed to the fires. The smoke from the blazes covered the grapes and altered their flavor and aroma. The wineries and vineyards stated that their efforts to clean the grapes were unsuccessful, and that their revenues and reputations were harmed. The company stated that it has settled around 2,700 wildfire-related claims since 2020, and the wineries' attorney stated that the electricity provider has paid nearly $750 million in wildfire-related claims.

Shopper Receives $11.3 Million Jury Award After Parking Lot Fall—Liability

A woman who tripped and fell in a major retail store's parking lot in Florida received over $11.3 million from a jury award. The 2019 incident occurred when the plaintiff, who was carrying a child, tripped over a seam where the asphalt met the concrete gutter of a curb. That area of the parking lot had an abrupt elevation change, which violated multiple building codes, according to a media report. The woman's ankle twisted on the uneven surface, causing an awkward fall as she tried to avoid dropping the child, resulting in a fractured right tibia, fibula and malleolus. The jury found the retailer to be 90% at fault in the incident.

Automotive Company Reaches $250 Million Settlement in IPO Lawsuit—Directors and Officers Liability

An American electric vehicle company has agreed to settle a 2022 securities class action lawsuit for $250 million. The claim, filed in California, alleged that the company's initial public offering (IPO) disclosures and certain post-IPO statements it made were materially false or misleading. The plaintiffs alleged the company failed to disclose material facts and risks, including that material costs for some of its vehicle models substantially exceeded the prices for which those cars were being sold, leading to a rise in retail prices. According to the settlement that is awaiting approval by the court, the automotive company will pay $250 million to settle the claims brought on behalf of purchases of the company's Class A common stock between Nov. 10, 2021, and March 10, 2022.

University Administrator Awarded $6 Million in Gender Discrimination Case—Employment Practices Liability

A California jury awarded $6 million to a former public university administrator who claimed she was subjected to severe or pervasive gender discrimination during her employment. The lawsuit, filed in 2023, asserted the university violated the state's Equal Pay Act through a pattern and practice of discrimination and sexual harassment against female employees. Along with a co-worker whose claim was later separated into another lawsuit, the plaintiff alleged they were forced to resign or fired for speaking out about the mistreatment and pay disparity of female employees. The university administrator in this case claimed she fielded several complaints from female employees who attended an event where two male department heads berated a female employee, with a male dean in attendance. However, the dean did nothing. When the plaintiff confronted the dean about the incident, the plaintiff was targeted for termination with pretextual accusations of misuse of vacation time and eventually constructively terminated, being forced to resign. Trial evidence demonstrated that the plaintiffs and several others had brought forward gender discrimination complaints, including pay disparities between females and males, but no investigations occurred. The plaintiff also argued at trial that the university did not address a survey that suggested a culture of fear, intimidation, gender-based mistreatment and bullying at the institution.

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