

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

Clifford A. Chanler, State Bar No. 135534  
Daniel Bornstein, State Bar No. 181711  
Laralei S. Paras, State Bar No. 203319  
HIRST & CHANLER  
2560 Ninth Street  
Parker Plaza, Suite 214  
Berkeley, CA 94710-2565

Tel: (510) 848-8880  
Fax: (510) 848-8118

Attorneys for Plaintiff  
RUSSELL BRIMER

ENDORSED  
FILED  
ALAMEDA COUNTY  
NOV 07 2005  
CLERK OF THE SUPERIOR COURT  
By CCJ Deputy

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
FOR THE COUNTY OF ALAMEDA  
UNLIMITED CIVIL JURISDICTION

RUSSELL BRIMER, )  
 )  
 Plaintiff, )  
 )  
 v. )  
 )  
 LEE'S POTTERY, INC.; WAL-MART )  
 STORES, INC.; and DOES 1 through 150, )  
 inclusive. )  
 )  
 Defendants. )

No. RG05240912  
**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL  
PENALTIES AND INJUNCTIVE  
RELIEF**  
*(Health & Safety Code §25249, et seq.)*

RUSSELL BRIMER, by and through his counsel, on behalf of himself, on behalf all others  
similarly situated and on behalf of the general public, hereby alleges as follows:

1 NATURE OF THE ACTION

2 1. This Complaint is a representative action brought by plaintiff RUSSELL BRIMER,  
3 on behalf of citizens of the State of California, to enforce each citizen's right to be informed of the  
4 presence of and nature of toxic chemicals in consumer goods.

5 2. This Complaint seeks to remedy defendants' continuing failures to warn the citizens  
6 of the State of California about the presence of, the nature of, and such citizens' actual and  
7 potential exposure to lead present in or on consumer products placed into the stream of commerce  
8 by defendants.

9 3. Lead is a chemical that is identified in Title 22, California Code of Regulations  
10 ("CCR") §12000 that is known to the State of California to cause birth defects and other  
11 reproductive harm. Lead shall hereafter be referred to as the "LISTED CHEMICAL". The  
12 consumer products containing the LISTED CHEMICAL, and for which defendants are responsible,  
13 are pots and other planters with colored artwork or designs on the exterior, including but not  
14 limited to, *10" Lotus Pot (#037094 31510 9)*. All such consumer products containing the LISTED  
15 CHEMICAL shall hereafter be referred to as the "PRODUCTS".

16 4. Under California's Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986,  
17 Health & Safety Code §25249.5 *et seq.*<sup>1</sup> (hereafter "Proposition 65"), "No person in the course of  
18 doing business shall knowingly and intentionally expose any individual to a chemical known to the  
19 state to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable warning to  
20 such individual...."

21 5. On February 27, 1987, the State listed lead as a chemical known to cause birth  
22 defects and other reproductive harm. This chemical became subject to the warning requirement  
23 one year later and was therefore subject to the "clear and reasonable warning" requirements of  
24 Proposition 65, beginning on February 27, 1988. (22 CCR §12000(b)(c); Proposition 65)

25 6. Defendants' failures to provide proper mandatory warnings about exposure to the  
26 LISTED CHEMICAL in conjunction with the sale of the PRODUCTS is a violation of Proposition  
27

28 <sup>1</sup> Unless specifically noted, all statutory citations refer to California law.

1 65 and subjects defendants to enjoinder of such conduct as well as civil penalties for each such  
2 violation.

3 7. For defendants' violations of Proposition 65, plaintiff seeks preliminary injunctive  
4 and permanent injunctive relief to compel defendants to provide purchasers of the PRODUCTS  
5 with the appropriate Proposition 65 warning regarding the health hazards of the LISTED  
6 CHEMICAL.

7 8. Plaintiff also seeks civil penalties against defendants for their violations of  
8 Proposition 65, as provided for by Health & Safety Code §25249.7(b).

9 **PARTIES**

10 9. Plaintiff RUSSELL BRIMER is a citizen of the State of California who is dedicated  
11 to protecting the health of California citizens, including the elimination or reduction of toxic  
12 exposures from consumer products, and who brings this action on behalf of the general public  
13 pursuant to Health & Safety Code §25249.7.

14 10. Defendant LEE'S POTTERY, INC. ("LEE'S") is a person doing business within the  
15 meaning of Health & Safety Code §25249.11.

16 11. LEE'S manufactures, distributes and/or offers the PRODUCTS for sale or use in the  
17 State of California or implies by its conduct that it manufactures, distributes and/or offers the  
18 PRODUCTS for sale or use in the State of California.

19 12. Defendant WAL-MART STORES, INC ("WAL-MART") is a person doing  
20 business within the meaning of Health & Safety Code §25249.11.

21 13. WAL-MART distributes and/or offers the PRODUCTS for sale or use in the State  
22 of California or implies by its conduct that it distributes and/or offers the PRODUCTS for sale or  
23 use in the State of California.

24 14. Defendants DOES 1-50 (hereafter "MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS") are each  
25 persons doing business within the meaning of Health & Safety Code §25249.11.

26 15. MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS engage in the process of research, testing,  
27 designing, assembling, fabricating and/or manufacturing, or imply by their conduct that they  
28 engage in the process of research, testing, designing, assembling, fabricating and/or manufacturing,

1 one or more of the PRODUCTS for sale, consumption or use in the State of California.

2 16. Defendants DOES 51-100 (hereafter "DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS") are each  
3 persons doing business within the meaning of Health & Safety Code §25249.11.

4 17. DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS distribute, exchange, transfer, process and/or  
5 transport one or more of the PRODUCTS to individuals, businesses or retailers in the State of  
6 California.

7 18. Defendants DOES 101-150 (hereafter "RETAIL DEFENDANTS") are each persons  
8 doing business within the meaning of Health & Safety Code §25249.11.

9 19. RETAIL DEFENDANTS offer the PRODUCTS for sale to individuals in the State  
10 of California.

11 20. At this time, the true names of Defendants DOES 1 through 150, inclusive, are  
12 unknown to plaintiff, who therefore sues said defendants by their fictitious name pursuant to Code  
13 of Civil Procedure §474. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that each of  
14 the fictitiously named defendants is responsible for the acts and occurrences herein alleged. When  
15 ascertained, their true names shall be reflected in an amended complaint.

16 21. LEE'S, WAL-MART, MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS, DISTRIBUTOR  
17 DEFENDANTS, RETAIL DEFENDANTS, and Defendants DOES 1 through 150 shall, where  
18 appropriate, collectively be referred to hereafter as "DEFENDANTS".

19 **VENUE AND JURISDICTION**

20 22. Venue is proper in the Alameda Superior Court, pursuant to Code of Civil  
21 Procedure §§394, 395, 395.5 because this Court is a court of competent jurisdiction, because one or  
22 more instances of wrongful conduct occurred, and continues to occur, in the County of Alameda  
23 and/or because DEFENDANTS conducted, and continue to conduct, business in this County with  
24 respect to the PRODUCTS.

25 23. The California Superior Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to  
26 California Constitution Article VI, §10, which grants the Superior Court "original jurisdiction in all  
27 causes except those given by statute to other trial courts." The statute under which this action is  
28 brought does not specify any other basis of subject matter jurisdiction.



1 such exposure.

2 30. The appropriate public enforcement agencies have failed to commence and  
3 diligently prosecute a cause of action, under Health & Safety Code §25249.6, *et seq.*, against  
4 DEFENDANTS based on the claims asserted in Plaintiff's 60-Day Notice.

5 31. At all times relevant to this action, the PRODUCTS contained the LISTED  
6 CHEMICAL.

7 32. At all times relevant to this action, the DEFENDANTS knew or should have known  
8 that the PRODUCTS contained the LISTED CHEMICAL.

9 33. At all times relevant to this action, the LISTED CHEMICAL was present in or on  
10 the PRODUCTS in such a way as to be available for transfer or release from PRODUCTS to  
11 individuals during the reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS.

12 34. The normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS has caused and  
13 continues to cause an exposure to the LISTED CHEMICAL, as such exposure is defined by  
14 22 CCR §12601.

15 35. Based on information and good faith belief, plaintiff alleges that at all times relevant  
16 to this action, DEFENDANTS had knowledge that individuals' normal and reasonably foreseeable  
17 use of the PRODUCTS would cause an exposure to the LISTED CHEMICAL.

18 36. At all times relevant to this action, DEFENDANTS, and each of them, intended that  
19 such exposures to the LISTED CHEMICAL from the reasonably foreseeable use of the  
20 PRODUCTS would occur by their deliberate, non-accidental participation in the manufacture,  
21 distribution and/or sale of PRODUCTS to individuals in the State of California.

22 37. At all times relevant to this action, DEFENDANTS failed to provide a "clear and  
23 reasonable warning" of reproductive toxicity (as defined by 22 CCR §12601) to those consumers or  
24 other individuals in the State of California who were or could become exposed to the PRODUCTS  
25 and the LISTED CHEMICAL contained therein.

26 38. Contrary to the express policy and statutory prohibition of Proposition 65, enacted  
27 directly by California voters, individuals thus exposed to the LISTED CHEMICAL from the  
28 PRODUCTS, without "clear and reasonable warning", have suffered and continue to suffer

1 irreparable harm, for which harm they have no plain, speedy or adequate remedy at law.

2 39. As a consequence of the above-described acts, DEFENDANTS, and each of them,  
3 are liable, pursuant to Health & Safety Code §25249.7(b), for a maximum civil penalty of \$2,500  
4 per day for each violation.

5 40. As a consequence of the above-described acts, Health & Safety Code §25249.7 also  
6 specifically authorizes the grant of injunctive relief under Proposition 65 against DEFENDANTS.

7 Wherefore, plaintiff prays judgment against DEFENDANTS, and each of them, as  
8 set forth hereafter.

9 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

10 Wherefore, plaintiff prays for judgment against DEFENDANTS as follows:

11 1. That the Court, pursuant to Health & Safety Code §25249.7(b), assess civil penalties  
12 against DEFENDANTS, and each of them, in the amount of \$2,500 per day for each violation  
13 alleged herein;

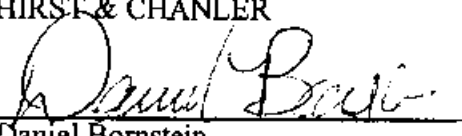
14 2. That the Court, pursuant to Health & Safety Code §25249.7(a), preliminarily and  
15 permanently enjoin DEFENDANTS, and each of them, from offering the PRODUCTS for sale or  
16 use in California, without providing an identification of the LISTED CHEMICAL in the  
17 PRODUCTS as well as "clear and reasonable warning[s]" as defined by 22 CCR §12601, as  
18 plaintiff shall specify in further application to the Court;

19 3. That the Court grant plaintiff his reasonable attorney's fees and costs of suit; and

20 4. That the Court grant such other and further relief as may be just and proper.

21 Dated: November 7, 2005

22 Respectfully Submitted,  
HIRST & CHANLER

23   
24 Daniel Bornstein  
25 Attorneys for Plaintiff  
26 RUSSELL BRIMER  
27  
28