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FILED
Superior Court Of California,
Sacramento
04/29/2009
avlaisavich
By _____, Deputy
Case Number:
34-2009-00042711

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

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Assignments
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ANTHONY E. HELD, Ph.D., P.E.,

Plaintiff,

v.

NAKAJIMA USA, INC.; and DOES 1-150,
inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No. _____

**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES
AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

(Cal. Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 et seq.)

BY FAX

NATURE OF THE ACTION

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2 1. This Complaint is a representative action brought by plaintiff ANTHONY E.
3 HELD, Ph.D., P.E., in the public interest of the citizens of the State of California, to enforce the
4 People’s right to be informed of the presence of di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate, a toxic chemical
5 found in children’s vinyl card cases and accessories with vinyl components sold in California.

6 2. By this Complaint, plaintiff seeks to remedy defendants’ continuing failures to
7 warn California citizens about their exposure to di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate present in and/or on
8 certain children’s vinyl card cases and accessories with vinyl components that defendants
9 manufacture, distribute and/or offer for sale to consumers throughout the State of California.

10 3. High levels of di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate are commonly found in and/or on
11 children’s vinyl card cases and accessories with vinyl components that defendants manufacture,
12 distribute and/or offer for sale to consumers throughout the State of California.

13 4. Under California’s Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986,
14 California Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 *et seq.* (“Proposition 65”), “No person in the course
15 of doing business shall knowingly and intentionally expose any individual to a chemical known
16 to the state to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable
17 warning to such individual. . . .” (*Cal. Health & Safety Code § 25249.6.*)

18 5. On October 24, 2003, California identified and listed di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate as
19 a chemical known to cause birth defects and other reproductive harm. Di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate
20 became subject to the warning requirement one year later and was therefore subject to the “clear
21 and reasonable warning” requirements of Proposition 65, beginning on October 24, 2004.
22 (*27 CCR § 27001; Cal. Health & Safety Code § 25249.8.*)

23 6. Di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate shall hereinafter be referred to as the “LISTED
24 CHEMICAL.”

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1 7. Defendants manufacture, distribute, and/or sell children’s vinyl card cases and
2 accessories with vinyl components with excessive levels of the LISTED CHEMICAL including,
3 but not limited to, *Sesame Street Elmo Card Case, #29345-8 (#8 81780 29345 1)*. All such
4 children’s vinyl card cases and accessories with vinyl components containing the LISTED
5 CHEMICAL shall hereinafter be referred to as the “PRODUCTS.”

6 8. Defendants’ failures to warn consumers and/or other individuals in the State of
7 California about their exposure to the LISTED CHEMICAL in conjunction with defendants’ sale
8 of the PRODUCTS is a violation of Proposition 65 and subjects defendants to enjoinder of
9 such conduct as well as civil penalties for each such violation.

10 9. For defendants’ violations of Proposition 65, plaintiff seeks preliminary injunctive
11 and permanent injunctive relief to compel defendants to provide purchasers or users of the
12 PRODUCTS with the required warning regarding the health hazards of the LISTED
13 CHEMICAL. (*Cal. Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(a)*.)

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

16 **PARTIES**

17 11. Plaintiff ANTHONY E. HELD, Ph.D., P.E., is a citizen of the City and County of
18 Sacramento in the State of California who is dedicated to protecting the health of California
19 citizens through the elimination or reduction of toxic exposures from consumer products, and
20 brings this action in the public interest pursuant to California Health & Safety Code § 25249.7.

21 12. Defendant NAKAJIMA USA, INC. (“NAKAJIMA”) is a person doing business
22 within the meaning of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.11.

23 13. Defendant NAKAJIMA manufactures, distributes, and/or offers the PRODUCTS
24 for sale in the State of California or implies by its conduct that it manufactures, distributes and/or
25 offers the PRODUCTS for sale in the State of California.

26 14. Defendants DOES 1-50 (“MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS”) are each persons
27 doing business within the meaning of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.11.

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1 15. MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS engage in the process of research, testing,
2 designing, assembling, fabricating and/or manufacturing, or imply by their conduct that they
3 engage in the process of research, testing, designing, assembling, fabricating and/or
4 manufacturing, one or more of the PRODUCTS for sale in the State of California.

5 16. Defendants DOES 51-100 (“DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS”) are each persons
6 doing business within the meaning of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.11.

7 17. DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS distribute, exchange, transfer, process and/or
8 transport one or more of the PRODUCTS to individuals, businesses or retailers for sale in the
9 State of California.

10 18. Defendants DOES 101-150 (“RETAIL DEFENDANTS”) are each persons doing
11 business within the meaning of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.11.

12 19. RETAIL DEFENDANTS offer the PRODUCTS for sale to individuals in the State
13 of California.

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

19 21. NAKAJIMA, MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS, DISTRIBUTOR
20 DEFENDANTS, and RETAIL DEFENDANTS shall, where appropriate, collectively be referred
21 to hereinafter as “DEFENDANTS.”

22 VENUE AND JURISDICTION

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

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

5 24. The California Superior Court has jurisdiction over DEFENDANTS based on
6 plaintiff’s information and good faith belief that each defendant is a person, firm, corporation or
7 association that either are citizens of the State of California, have sufficient minimum contacts in
8 the State of California, or otherwise purposefully avail themselves of the California market.
9 DEFENDANTS’ purposeful availment renders the exercise of personal jurisdiction by California
10 courts consistent with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.

11 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

12 **(Violation of Proposition 65 – Against All Defendants)**

13 25. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference, as if fully set forth herein,
14 Paragraphs 1 through 24, inclusive.

15 26. The citizens of the State of California have expressly stated in the Safe Drinking
16 Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, California Health & Safety Code § 25249.5, *et seq.*
17 (Proposition 65) that they must be informed “about exposures to chemicals that cause cancer,
18 birth defects and other reproductive harm.” (*Cal. Health & Safety Code § 25249.6.*)

19 27. Proposition 65 states, “No person in the course of doing business shall knowingly
20 and intentionally expose any individual to a chemical known to the state to cause cancer or
21 reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable warning to such individual....”

22 (*Id.*)

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1 28. On January 26, 2009, a sixty-day notice of violation, together with the requisite
2 certificate of merit, was provided to NAKAJIMA and various public enforcement agencies
3 stating that as a result of DEFENDANTS' sales of the PRODUCTS, purchasers and users in the
4 State of California were being exposed to the LISTED CHEMICAL resulting from the
5 reasonably foreseeable uses of the PRODUCTS, without the individual purchasers and users first
6 having been provided with a "clear and reasonable warning" regarding such toxic exposures
7 ("60-Day Notice of Violation").

8 29. DEFENDANTS have engaged in the manufacture, distribution and/or offering of
9 the PRODUCTS for sale in violation of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 and
10 DEFENDANTS' manufacture, distribution and/or offering of the PRODUCTS for sale in
11 violation of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 has continued to occur beyond
12 DEFENDANTS' receipt of plaintiff's 60-Day Notice of Violation. Plaintiff further alleges and
13 believes that such violations will continue to occur into the future.

14 30. After receipt of the claims asserted in the 60-Day Notice of Violation, the
15 appropriate public enforcement agencies have failed to commence and diligently prosecute a
16 cause of action against DEFENDANTS under Proposition 65.

17 31. The PRODUCTS manufactured, distributed, and/or offered for sale in California
18 by DEFENDANTS contained the LISTED CHEMICAL above the allowable state limits.

19 32. DEFENDANTS knew or should have known that the PRODUCTS manufactured,
20 distributed, and/or offered for sale by DEFENDANTS in California contained the LISTED
21 CHEMICAL.

22 33. The LISTED CHEMICAL was present in or on the PRODUCTS in such a way as
23 to expose individuals to the LISTED CHEMICAL through dermal contact and/or ingestion
24 during the reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS.

25 34. The normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS has caused and
26 continues to cause consumer exposures to the LISTED CHEMICAL, as such exposure is defined
27 by 27 CCR § 25602(b).

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1 35. DEFENDANTS had knowledge that the normal and reasonably foreseeable use of
2 the PRODUCTS would expose individuals to the LISTED CHEMICAL through dermal contact
3 and/or ingestion.

4 36. DEFENDANTS intended that such exposures to the LISTED CHEMICAL from
5 the reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS would occur by their deliberate, non-
6 accidental participation in the manufacture, distribution and/or offer for sale of PRODUCTS to
7 individuals in the State of California.

8 37. DEFENDANTS failed to provide a “clear and reasonable warning” to those
9 consumers and/or other individuals in the State of California who were or who could become
10 exposed to the LISTED CHEMICAL through dermal contact and/or ingestion during the
11 reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS.

12 38. Contrary to the express policy and statutory prohibition of Proposition 65, enacted
13 directly by California voters, individuals exposed to the LISTED CHEMICAL through dermal
14 contact and/or ingestion resulting from the reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS, sold
15 by DEFENDANTS without a “clear and reasonable warning,” have suffered, and continue to
16 suffer, irreparable harm, for which harm they have no plain, speedy or adequate remedy at law.

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

20 40. As a consequence of the above-described acts, California Health & Safety
21 Code § 25249.7(a) also specifically authorizes the Court to grant injunctive relief against
22 DEFENDANTS.

23 41. Wherefore, plaintiff prays for judgment against DEFENDANTS as set forth
24 hereinafter.

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1 PRAYER FOR RELIEF

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

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

6 2. That the Court, pursuant to California Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(a),
7 preliminarily and permanently enjoin DEFENDANTS from manufacturing, distributing or
8 offering the PRODUCTS for sale or use in California, without providing "clear and reasonable
9 warnings" as defined by 27 CCR § 25601, as to the harms associated with exposures to the
10 LISTED CHEMICAL;

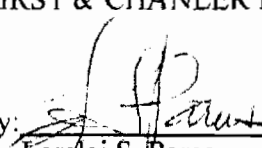
11 3. That the Court grant plaintiff his reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of suit; and

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

13 Respectfully Submitted,

HIRST & CHANLER LLP

14 Dated: April 21, 2009

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16 By: 
17 Laralei S. Paras
18 Attorneys for Plaintiff
19 ANTHONY E. HELD, Ph.D., P.E.
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