1 2 3 4 5	WILLIAM VERICK, SBN 140972 Klamath Environmental Law Center FREDRIC EVENSON, SBN 198059 424 First Street Eureka, CA 95501 Telephone: (707) 268-8900 Facsimile: (707) 268-8901 wverick@igc.org ecorights@earthlink.net ENDURSED FILED San Francisco County Superior Court DEC - 9 2010 CLERK OF THE COURT BY: PARAM NATT Deputy Clerk
6 7 8 9	BRIAN ACREE, SBN 202505 Public Interest Lawyers Group 370 Grand Avenue, Suite 5 Oakland, CA 94610 Telephone: (510) 271-0826 Facsimile: (510) 271-0829 davidwilliams@earthlink.net brianacree@earthlink.net DEPARTMENT 212
11 12 13	Attorneys for Plaintiff, MATEEL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOUNDATION SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
14 15	COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO (Unlimited Jurisdiction) C G C - 10 - 50 5 9 8 4
16 17 18	MATEEL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOUNDATION, Plaintiff, v. CASE NO. CASE NO. COMPLAINT FOR INJUNCTIVE RELIEF AND CIVIL PENALTIES
20 21 22	BRINKER RESTAURANT CORPORATION and CHILI'S INC. Defendants/ TOXIC TORT/ENVIRONMENTAL
23	MATEEL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOUNDATION alleges as follows: <u>INTRODUCTION</u>
24 25	1. This Complaint seeks civil penalties and an injunction to remedy the continuing
26	failure of defendants BRINKER RESTAURANT CORPORATION and CHILI'S, INC.
27 28	(hereinafter "Defendants"), to give clear and reasonable warnings to those residents of California, who contact the chili pepper-shaped door handles of Chili's restaurants. Defendants
	COMPLAINT FOR INJUNCTION AND CIVIL PENALTIES 1

failed to warn these California residents that contact with these door handles causes those

residents to be exposed to lead and lead compounds, lead acetate, lead phosphate, and lead

subacetate (hereinafter, collectively, "lead"). The above-referenced "contact" occurs when

California residents grasp the door handle to open the front door to Chili's restaurants, or when

residents touch the handle to clean or maintain it. The above-referenced door handles are made

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reproductive harm.

3. Plaintiff seeks injunctive relief pursuant to Health & Safety Code Section 25249.7 to compel Defendants to bring their business practices into compliance with section 25249.5 et seq. by providing a clear and reasonable warning to each individual who has been and who in the future may be exposed to lead from contact with Defendants' door handles. Plaintiff also seeks an order that defendants provide warnings to people who in the past were exposed to lead from Defendants' chili pepper-shaped leaded brass door handles.

residents of California were and are being exposed to these chemicals when they contact leaded

brass door handles, Defendants did not and do not provide clear and reasonable warnings that

these door handles cause exposure to chemicals known to cause cancer, birth defects and other

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4. In addition to injunctive relief, plaintiff seeks civil penalties to remedy the failure of Defendants to provide clear and reasonable warnings regarding exposure to lead, which is known to cause cancer, birth defects and other reproductive harm.

5. Plaintiff MATEEL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOUNDATION ("Mateel") is a non-profit organization dedicated to, among other causes, the protection of the environment, promotion of human health, environmental education, and consumer rights. Mateel is based in Eureka, California, and is incorporated under the laws of the State of California. Mateel is a "person" pursuant to Health & Safety Code Section 25118. Mateel brings this enforcement action in the public interest pursuant to Health & Safety Code §25249.7(d). Residents of California are regularly exposed to lead and lead compounds from leaded brass utensils marketed by Defendants and are so exposed without a clear and reasonable Proposition 65 warning.

- 6. Defendants are each a person doing business within the meaning of Health & Safety Code Section 25249.11. Defendants are businesses that own and/or operate California restaurants that utilize chili pepper-shaped leaded brass door handles. Contact with Defendants' door handles at restaurants located in California, including restaurants located in the City and County of San Francisco, causes people to be exposed to lead and lead compounds while they are physically present in the City and County of San Francisco.
- 7. Plaintiff brings this enforcement action against Defendants pursuant to Health & Safety Code Section 25249.7(d). Attached hereto and incorporated by reference is a copy of a Notice of Violation letter dated September 15, 2010, which Mateel sent to California's Attorney General. Substantially identical letters were sent to the District Attorney for each of California's 58 counties, and to the City Attorney of each California city that has a population greater than 750,000. On that same day, Mateel sent identical Notice of Violation letters to each defendant. Attached to the Notice of Violation Letters sent to each defendant was a summary of Proposition 65 that was prepared by California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. In addition, each Notice of Violation Letter plaintiff sent was accompanied by a Certificate of Service attesting to the service of the Notice of Violation Letter on each entity that received it. Pursuant to California Health & Safety Code Section 25249.7(d), a Certificate of Merit attesting to the reasonable and meritorious basis for the action was also sent with each Notice of Violation Letter. Factual information sufficient to establish the basis of the Certificate of Merit was

enclosed with the Notice of Violation letter Mateel sent to the Attorney General.

8. Defendants are all businesses that employ more than ten people.

JURISDICTION

- 9. The Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to California Health & Safety Code Section 25249.7. California Constitution Article VI, Section 10 grants the Superior Court "original jurisdiction in all causes except those given by statute to other trial courts." Chapter 6.6 of the Health & Safety Code, which contains the statutes under which this action is brought, does not grant jurisdiction to any other trial court.
- 10. This Court also has jurisdiction over Defendants because they are businesses that have sufficient minimum contacts in California and within the City and County of San Francisco. Defendants intentionally opened, own and/or operate restaurants in the California and San Francisco County markets. It is thus consistent with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice for the San Francisco Superior Court to exercise jurisdiction over them.
- 11. Venue is proper in this Court because Defendants operate their restaurants in and around San Francisco and thus cause people to be exposed to lead and lead compounds while those people are physically present in San Francisco. Liability for Plaintiff's causes of action, or some parts thereof, has accordingly arisen in San Francisco during the times relevant to this Complaint and Plaintiff seeks civil penalties and forfeitures imposed by statutes.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION (Claim for Injunctive Relief)

- 12. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference into this First Cause of Action, as if specifically set forth herein, paragraphs 1 through 11, inclusive.
- 13. The People of the State of California have declared by referendum under Proposition 65 (California Health & Safety Code § 25249.5 et seq.) their right "[t]o be informed about exposures to chemicals that cause cancer, birth defects, and reproductive harm."
- 14. To effectuate this goal, Section 25249.6 of the Health and Safety Code mandates that persons who, in the course of doing business, knowingly and intentionally expose any individual to a chemical known to the State of California to cause cancer or birth defects must

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first provide a clear and reasonable warning to such individual prior to the exposure.

- Since at least September 15, 2007, Defendants have engaged in conduct that violates Health and Safety Code Section 25249.6 et seq. This conduct includes knowingly and intentionally exposing to lead, those California residents who contact Defendants' leaded brass door handles. People who enter Defendants' restaurants in the normally intended way — by opening the front door — are exposed to lead and lead compounds, which are chemicals known to the State of California to cause cancer, birth defects and other reproductive harm. Defendants have not provided clear and reasonable warnings, within the meaning of Health & Safety Code Sections 25249.6 and 25249.11.
- At all times relevant to this action, Defendants knew that contact with the leaded 16. brass door handles on their restaurants were causing exposures to lead and lead compounds. Defendants intended that residents of California contact Defendants' leaded brass door handles in such ways as would lead to significant exposures to these chemicals.
- 17. By the above described acts, Defendants have violated Cal. Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 and are therefore subject to an injunction ordering them to stop violating Proposition 65 and requiring them to provide warnings to their past and future customers who contact, or who have contacted or will contact Defendants' leaded brass door handles.

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION (Claim for Civil Penalties)

- Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference into this Second Cause of Action, 18. as if specifically set forth herein, paragraphs 1 through 17, inclusive.
- 19. By the above described acts, Defendants are liable and should be liable pursuant to Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(b), for a civil penalty of \$2,500.00 per day for each time an individual was exposed without proper warning to lead and lead compounds from the contact with Defendants' leaded brass door handles.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

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

Pursuant to the First Cause of Action, that all Defendants be enjoined, restrained, 1.

and ordered to comply with the provisions of Section 25249.6 of the California Health & Safety Code;

- 2. Pursuant to the Second Cause of Action, that Defendants be assessed a civil penalty in an amount equal to \$2,500.00 per day per individual exposed, in violation of Section 25249.6 of the California Health & Safety Code, to lead and lead compounds as the result of contact with Defendants' leaded brass door handles;
- 3. That Defendants be ordered to provide Proposition 65-complaint warning to those people who, in the past, came into contact with Defendants' leaded brass door handles.
- 4. That Defendant be ordered to pay Mateel's attorney's fees and costs incurred in prosecuting this action.
 - 5. For such other relief as this court deems just and proper.

Dated: December 9, 2010

David Williams

Attorney for Plaintiff

Mateel Environmental Justice Foundation



September 15, 2010

PROPOSITION 65 ENFORCEMENT REPORTING ATTENTION: PROP 65 COORDINATOR 1515 CLAY STREET, SUITE 2000 P.O. BOX 70550 OAKLAND CA 94612-0550

Greetings:

This office and the Mateel Environmental Justice Foundation ("Mateel") give you notice that the private businesses on the attached service list have been, are, will and threaten to be in violation of Cal. Health & Safety Code § 25249.6. Both this office and Mateel are private enforcers of Proposition 65, both may be contacted at the below-listed address and telephone number, and I am a responsible individual at both Mateel and this office. The above referenced violations occur when California residents come into contact with brass handles on the entrance doors to Chili's restaurants (collectively "Chili's door handles"). Chili's door handles are made in whole, or in part, from leaded brass, which contain lead and lead compounds ("lead"), which are chemicals known to cause cancer, birth defects and other reproductive harm. California residents are exposed to lead whenever they put their hands on the Chili's door handles to open and close the doors to Chili's restaurants. Lead is transferred from the Chili's door handles to their hands and to other parts of their skin. This lead is then absorbed through the skin, taken into cuts and abrasions, absorbed through mucous membranes, and transferred from the skin to the mouth via oral contact either directly with the lead-contaminated skin, and when lead is transferred from contaminated skin to cigarettes and food and the contaminated cigarettes and food are smoked and/or eaten. These lead exposures thus occur via the dermal absorption, subcutaneous, mucous membrane, ingestion and inhalation routes. These businesses did not and do not provide people with clear and reasonable warnings before they expose them to lead. These violations have occurred every day since at least September 15, 2007 and will continue every day until the lead is removed from the Chili's door handles, or until clear and reasonable warnings are given. The above-referenced violations are alleged for occupational exposures as well as for consumer and environmental exposures. We do not, however, allege occupational exposure violations as to any brass products made outside of California, except as to workplaces these businesses themselves maintain in California.

William Verick

SERVICE LIST

PROPOSITION 65 ENFORCEMENT REPORTING ATTENTION: PROP 65 COORDINATOR 1515 CLAY STREET, SUITE 2000 POST OFFICE BOX 70550 OAKAND, CA 94612-0550

OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY CITY OF OAKLAND 505 14TH ST 12TH FLOOR OAKLAND, CA 94612

OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO CITY HALL ROOM 206 400 VAN NESS SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102

OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY CITY OF SACRAMENTO PO BOX 1948 SACRAMENTO, CA 95812-1948

OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY CITY OF SAN JOSE 200 EAST SANTA CLARA STREET SAN JOSE, CA 95113

OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY CITY OF LOS ANGELES 200 N. MAIN ST. LOS ANGELES, CA 90012

OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY CITY OF SAN DIEGO CONSUMER & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION 1200 THIRD AVENUE, SUITE 700 SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF ALAMEDA 1225 FALLON STREET ROOM 900 OAKLAND, CA 94612

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF ALPINE P.O. 30X 248 MARKLEEVILLE, CA 96120

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF AMADOR 708 COURT STREET JACKSON, CA 95642

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF BUTTE 25 COUNTY CENTER DR. CROVILLE, CA 95965

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF CALAVERAS GOVERNMENT CENTER 891 MOUNTAIN RANCH ROAD SAN ANDREAS, CA95249

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF COLUSA 547 MARKET STREET COLUSA, CA 95932

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF CONTRA COSTA P.O. 80× 670 MARTINEZ, CA 94553

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF DEL NORTE 450 H ST #171 CRESCENT CITY, CA 95531

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF EL DORADO \$15 MAIN ST. PLACERVILLE, CA 95667

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF FRESNO 2220 TULARE ST # 1000 FRESNO, CA 93721

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF GLENN P.O. 80X 430 WILLOWS, CA 95988 OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT 825 5TH ST, EUREKA, CA 95501

COUNTY OF IMPERIAL COURTHOUSE, FLOOR 2 939 W. MAIN ST EL CENTRO, CA 92243

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF INYO
P.O. DRAWER D
INDEPENDENCE, CA 93526

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF KERN 1215 TRUXTUN AVE. FLOOR 4 BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF KINGS 1400 W. LACEY BLVD. HANFORD, CA 93230

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF LAKE 255 N. FORBES ST # 424 LAKEPORT, CA 95453

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF LASSEN 220 SOUTH LASSEN ST. STE 8 SUSANVILLE, CA 96130

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES 18000 CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING 210 W. TEMPLE ST. LOS ANGELES, CA 90012

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF MADERA 209 W. YOSEMITE AVE. MADERA, CA 93637

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF MARIN HALL OF JUSTICE #183 SAN RAFAEL, CA 94903

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF MARIPOSA P.O. BOX 730 MARIPOSA, CA 95338

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF MENDOCINO PO BOX 1000 UKIAH, CA 95482

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF MERCED 2222 M ST. MERCED, CA 95340

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF MODOC 204 SOUTH COURT STREET ALTURAS, CA 96101

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF MONO P.O. 30X 617 BRIDGEPORT, CA 93517

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF MONTEREY 240 CHURCH STREET P.O. BOX 1131 SALINAS, CA 93902

COUNTY OF NAPA 931 PARKWAY MALL P.O. 30X 720 NAPA, CA 94559-0720

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF NEVADA I 10 UNION STREET NEVADA CITY, CA 95959 OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF ORANGE 401 CIVIC CENTER DR WEST SANTA ANA, CA 92701

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF PLACER 10810 JUSTICE CENTER DR. STE 240 ROSEVILLE, CA 95678

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF PLUMAS 520 MAIN STREET #404 QUINCY, CA 95971

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE 4075 MAIN ST. RIVERSIDE, CA 92507

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO 901 G STREET SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF SAN BENITO 419 4TH ST HOLLISTER, CA 95023

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO 316 MT. VIEW AVE. SAN BERNARDINO. CA 92415-0004

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO 330 W, BROADWAY, SUITE 1 100 SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO 850 BRYANT ST #322 SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94103

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF SAN JOAQUIN 222 E. WEBER AVE #202 STOCKTON, CA 95202

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER #450 SAN LUIS OBISPO. CA 93468

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF SAN MATEO HALL OF JUSTICE AND RECORDS REDWOOD CITY, CA 94063

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA 1112 SANTA BARBARA ST, SANTA BARBARA, CA 93101

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA 70 W. HEDDING ST. SAN JOSE, CA 95110

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ 701 OCEAN ST. #200 SANTA CRUZ, CA 95050

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF SHASTA 1525 COURT ST. REDDING, CA 96001

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF STERRA P.O. 8OX 457 DOWNIEVILLE, CA 95936

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF SISKIYOU P.O. BOX 986 YREKA, CA 96097

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF SOLANO 600 UNION AVE FAIRFIELD, CA 94533 OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF SONOMA 500 ADMINISTRATION DR. #212J SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF STANISLAUS 1100 I ST. #200 MODESTO, CA 95354

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF SUTTER 1160 CIVIC CENTER BLVD. #A YUBA CITY, CA 95993

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF TEHAMA P.O. BOX 519 REDBLUFF, CA 96080

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF TRINITY P.O. BOX 310 WEAVERVILLE, CA 96093

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF TULARE COURTHOUSE #224 VISALIA. CA 93291

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF TUOLUMNE 2 S. GREEN ST. SONORA. CA 95370

VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE 800 SOUTH VICTORIA AVE VENTURA, CA 93009

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF YOLO 301 SECOND STREET WOODLAND, CA 95695

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF YUBA 215 5TH ST. MARYSVILLE, CA 95901

TODD DIENER, PRESIDENT CHILI'S, INC. 6820 LBJ FWY DALLAS, TX 75240-651 I

BRYAN D. MCCRORY, CEO BRINKER RESTAURANT CORPORATION 6820 LBJ FWY DALLAS, IX 75240-651 1

CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

I, William Verick, hereby declare: This Certificate of Merit accompanies the attached sixty-day notice(s) in which it is alleged the parties identified in the notices have violated Health and Safety Code section 25249.6 by failing to provide clear and reasonable warnings. I am the attorney for the noticing party. I have consulted with one or more persons with relevant and appropriate experience or expertise who has reviewed facts, studies, or other data regarding the exposure to the listed chemical that is the subject of the action. Based on the information obtained through those consultations, and on all other information in my possession, I believe there is a reasonable and meritorious case for the private action. I understand that "reasonable and meritorious case for the private action" means that the information provides a credible basis that all elements of the plaintiffs' case can be established and the information did not prove that the alleged violator will be able to establish any of the affirmative defenses set forth in the statute. The copy of this Certificate of Merit served on the Attorney General attaches to it factual information sufficient to establish the basis for this certificate, including the information identified in Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(h)(2), i.e., (1) the identity of the person(s) consulted with and relied on by the certifier, and (2) the facts, studies, or other data reviewed by those persons; (1)

Dated: September 15, 2010

William Verick

This notice alleges the violation of Proposition 65 with respect to occupational exposures governed by the California State Plan for Occupational Safety and Health. The State Plan incorporates the provisions of Proposition 65, as approved by Federal OSHA on June 6, 1997. This approval specifically placed certain conditions on Proposition 65, including that it does not apply to the conduct of manufacturers occurring outside the State of California. The approval also provides that an employer may use the means of compliances in the general hazard communication requirements to comply with Proposition 65. It also requires that supplemental enforcement is subject to the supervision of the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Accordingly, any settlement, civil complaint, or substantive court orders in this matter must be submitted to the Attorney General.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Nicole Frank, declare:

If called, I could and would testify as follows: I am over eighteen. My business address is 424 First Street, Eureka, California, 95501. On September 15, 2010, I caused the attached 60-DAY NOTICE LETTER, or a letter identical in substance, to be served by U.S. Mail on those public enforcement agencies listed on the attached SERVICE LIST; in addition on the same date and by U.S. Mail I caused the attached 60-DAY NOTICE LETTER and PROPOSITION 65: A SUMMARY to be sent by Certified U.S. Mail to the private business entities also listed on the attached SERVICE LIST. I deposited copies of these documents in envelopes, postage pre-paid, with the U.S. Postal Service on the day on which the mail is collected. I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct and that this declaration was executed on September 15, 2010, at Eureka, California.

Nicole Frank

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