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JUN 15 2011  
CLERK OF THE SUPERIOR COURT  
By Esther Coleman, Deputy

8  
9 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
10 FOR THE COUNTY OF ALAMEDA  
11 UNLIMITED CIVIL JURISDICTION

12 RUSSELL BRIMER,

13 Plaintiff,

14 v.

15 THE MANUAL WOODWORKERS &  
16 WEAVERS, INC.; and DOES 1-150,  
inclusive,

17 Defendants.

Case No. RG11580915

**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES  
AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

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

**NATURE OF THE ACTION**

1  
2           1.     This Complaint is a representative action brought by plaintiff RUSSELL  
3 BRIMER, in the public interest of the citizens of the State of California, to enforce the People’s  
4 right to be informed of the presence of lead, a toxic chemical found in tote bags sold in  
5 California.

6           2.     By this Complaint, plaintiff seeks to remedy defendants’ continuing failures to  
7 warn California citizens about their exposure to lead, present in or on certain tote bags that  
8 defendants manufacture, distribute, and/or offer for sale to consumers throughout the State of  
9 California.

10          3.     High levels of lead are commonly found in and on tote bags that defendants  
11 manufacture, distribute, and/or offer for sale to consumers throughout the State of California.

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

17          5.     On February 27, 1987, California identified and listed lead as a chemical known  
18 to cause birth defects and other reproductive harm. Lead became subject to the warning  
19 requirement one year later and was therefore subject to the “clear and reasonable warning”  
20 requirements of Proposition 65, beginning on February 27, 1988. (*27 CCR § 27001 (c); Cal.*  
21 *Health & Safety Code § 25249.8.*) Lead shall be referred to hereinafter as the “LISTED  
22 CHEMICAL.”

23          6.     Defendants manufacture, distribute, and/or sell tote bags containing excessive  
24 levels of the LISTED CHEMICAL including, but not limited to, the *Tote Bag, Philippians 4:13,*  
25 *#9992300795, #03200.* All such tote bags containing the LISTED CHEMICAL shall  
26 hereinafter be referred to as the “PRODUCTS.”

27          7.     Defendants’ failures to warn consumers and/or other individuals in the State of  
28 California about their exposure to the LISTED CHEMICAL in conjunction with defendants’

1 sale of the PRODUCTS is a violation of Proposition 65 and subjects defendants to enjoinder  
2 of such conduct as well as civil penalties for each such violation.

3 8. For defendants' violations of Proposition 65, plaintiff seeks preliminary injunctive  
4 and permanent injunctive relief to compel defendants to provide purchasers or users of the  
5 PRODUCTS with the required warning regarding the health hazards of the LISTED  
6 CHEMICAL. (*Cal. Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(a).*)

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

9 **PARTIES**

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

14 11. Defendant THE MANUAL WOODWORKERS & WEAVERS, INC.  
15 ("MANUAL WOODWORKERS"), is a person doing business within the meaning of California  
16 Health & Safety Code § 25249.11.

17 12. Defendant MANUAL WOODWORKERS manufactures, distributes, and/or offers  
18 the PRODUCTS for sale or use in the State of California or implies by its conduct that it  
19 manufactures, distributes, and/or offers the PRODUCTS for sale or use in the State of  
20 California.

21 13. Defendants DOES 1-50 ("MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS") are each  
22 persons doing business within the meaning of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.11.

23 14. MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS engage in the process of research, testing,  
24 designing, assembling, fabricating and/or manufacturing, or imply by their conduct that they  
25 engage in the process of research, testing, designing, assembling, fabricating, and/or  
26 manufacturing, one or more of the PRODUCTS for sale or use in the State of California.

27 15. Defendants DOES 51-100 ("DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS") are each persons  
28 doing business within the meaning of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.11.



1 in the State of California, or otherwise purposefully avail themselves of the California market.  
2 DEFENDANTS' purposeful availment renders the exercise of personal jurisdiction by  
3 California courts consistent with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.

4 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

5 **(Violation of Proposition 65 - Against All Defendants)**

6 24. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference, as if fully set forth herein,  
7 Paragraphs 1 through 23, inclusive.

8 25. The citizens of the State of California have expressly stated in the Safe Drinking  
9 Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, California Health & Safety Code § 25249.5, *et seq.*  
10 (Proposition 65) that they must be informed "about exposures to chemicals that cause cancer,  
11 birth defects and other reproductive harm." (*Cal. Health & Safety Code § 25249.6.*)

12 26. Proposition 65 states, "No person in the course of doing business shall knowingly  
13 and intentionally expose any individual to a chemical known to the state to cause cancer or  
14 reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable warning to such individual..."  
15 (*Id.*)

16 27. On or about February 1, 2011, a sixty-day notice of violation, together with the  
17 requisite certificate of merit, was provided to MANUAL WOODWORKERS and various public  
18 enforcement agencies stating that as a result of the DEFENDANTS' sales of the PRODUCTS,  
19 purchasers and users in the State of California were being exposed to lead resulting from the  
20 reasonably foreseeable uses of the PRODUCTS, without the individual purchasers and users  
21 first having been provided with a "clear and reasonable warning" regarding such toxic  
22 exposures.

23 28. DEFENDANTS have engaged in the manufacture, distribution, and/or offering of  
24 the PRODUCTS for sale or use in violation of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 and  
25 DEFENDANTS' manufacture, distribution, and/or offering of the PRODUCTS for sale or use  
26 in violation of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 has continued to occur beyond  
27 DEFENDANTS' receipt of plaintiff's sixty-day notice of violation. Plaintiff further alleges and  
28 believes that such violations will continue to occur into the future.

1           29. After receipt of the claims asserted in the sixty-day notices of violation, the  
2 appropriate public enforcement agencies have failed to commence and diligently prosecute a  
3 cause of action against DEFENDANTS under Proposition 65.

4           30. The PRODUCTS manufactured, distributed, and/or offered for sale or use in  
5 California by DEFENDANTS contained the LISTED CHEMICAL above the allowable state  
6 limits.

7           31. DEFENDANTS knew or should have known that the PRODUCTS manufactured,  
8 distributed, and/or offered for sale or use by DEFENDANTS in California contained the  
9 LISTED CHEMICAL.

10          32. The LISTED CHEMICAL was present in or on the PRODUCTS in such a way as  
11 to expose individuals to the LISTED CHEMICAL through dermal contact and/or ingestion  
12 during the reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS.

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

16          34. DEFENDANTS had knowledge that the normal and reasonably foreseeable use of  
17 the PRODUCTS would expose individuals to the LISTED CHEMICAL through dermal contact  
18 and/or ingestion.

19          35. DEFENDANTS intended that such exposures to the LISTED CHEMICAL from  
20 the reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS would occur by their deliberate, non-  
21 accidental participation in the manufacture, distribution and/or offer for sale or use of  
22 PRODUCTS to individuals in the State of California.

23          36. DEFENDANTS failed to provide a "clear and reasonable warning" to those  
24 consumers and/or other individuals in the State of California who were or who could become  
25 exposed to the LISTED CHEMICAL through dermal contact and/or ingestion during the  
26 reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS.

27          37. Contrary to the express policy and statutory prohibition of Proposition 65, enacted  
28 directly by California voters, individuals exposed to the LISTED CHEMICAL through dermal

1 contact and/or ingestion resulting from the reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS, sold  
2 by DEFENDANTS without a “clear and reasonable warning,” have suffered, and continue to  
3 suffer, irreparable harm, for which harm they have no plain, speedy or adequate remedy at law.

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

7 39. As a consequence of the above-described acts, California Health & Safety Code  
8 § 25249.7(a) also specifically authorizes the Court to grant injunctive relief against  
9 DEFENDANTS.

10 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

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

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

15 2. That the Court, pursuant to California Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(a),  
16 preliminarily and permanently enjoin DEFENDANTS from manufacturing, distributing, or  
17 offering the PRODUCTS for sale or use in California, without providing “clear and reasonable  
18 warnings” as defined by 27 CCR § 25601, as to the harms associated with exposures the  
19 LISTED CHEMICAL;

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

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

22  
23 Respectfully Submitted,

24 THE CHANLER GROUP

25 Dated: June 14, 2011

26 By: 

27 Jennifer Henry  
28 Attorneys for Plaintiff  
RUSSELL BRIMER