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**FILED**

**SEP 20 2011**

**KIM TURNER**  
Court Executive Officer  
**MARIN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT**  
By: C. Lucchesi, Clerk

11 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
12 FOR THE COUNTY OF MARIN  
13 UNLIMITED CIVIL JURISDICTION

14 ANTHONY E. HELD, PH.D., P.E., )  
15 Plaintiff, )  
16 v. )  
17 Y & S HANDBAGS, INC.; and DOES 1-150, )  
18 inclusive, )  
19 Defendants. )

Case No. CIV 1104673

**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES  
AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

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

**BY FAX**

1 NATURE OF THE ACTION

2 1. This Complaint is a representative action brought by plaintiff Anthony E. Held,  
3 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 ("DEHP"), a toxic  
5 chemical found in handbags sold in California.

6 2. By this Complaint, plaintiff seeks to remedy defendant's continuing failure to warn  
7 California citizens about their exposure to DEHP, present in or on certain handbags that  
8 defendant manufactures, imports, distributes, and/or offers for sale to consumers throughout the  
9 State of California.

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

15 4. On October 24, 2003, California identified and listed DEHP as a chemical known  
16 to cause birth defects and other reproductive harm. DEHP became subject to the warning  
17 requirement one year later and was, therefore, subject to the "clear and reasonable warning"  
18 requirements of Proposition 65, beginning on October 24, 2004. (*27 CCR § 27001 (c); Cal.*  
19 *Health & Safety Code § 25249.8*.)

20 5. Defendant Y & S HANDBAGS, INC. ("Y & S" or "Defendant") manufactures,  
21 imports, distributes, and/or sells handbags, in the State of California, containing DEHP  
22 including, but not limited to *Magid Handbag, M500 (#7 88389 15746 0)*.

23 6. All such handbags containing DEHP, shall hereinafter be collectively referred to as  
24 the "Products."

25 7. Defendant's failure to warn consumers and/or other individuals in the State of  
26 California not covered by California's Occupational Safety Health Act, Labor Code § 6300 *et*  
27 *seq.* about their exposure to DEHP in conjunction with Defendant's distribution, importation,  
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1 manufacturing, and/or sale of the Products is a violation of Proposition 65 and subjects  
2 Defendant to enjoinder of such conduct as well as civil penalties for each such violation.

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

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

9 **PARTIES**

10 10. Anthony E. Held, PH.D., P.E. is a citizen of the State of California who is  
11 dedicated to protecting the health of California citizens through the elimination or reduction of  
12 toxic exposures from consumer and commercial products, and brings this action in the public  
13 interest pursuant to California Health & Safety Code § 25249.7.

14 11. Y & S is a person doing business within the meaning of California Health & Safety  
15 Code § 25249.11.

16 12. Y & S manufactures, imports, distributes, and/or offers the Products for sale or use  
17 in the State of California or implies by its conduct that it manufactures, imports, distributes,  
18 and/or offers the Products for sale or use in the State of California.

19 13. Defendants Does 1-50 ("Manufacturer Defendants") are each persons doing  
20 business within the meaning of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.11.

21 14. Manufacturer Defendants engage in the process of research, testing, designing,  
22 assembling, fabricating, and/or manufacturing, or imply by their conduct that they engage in the  
23 process of research, testing, designing, assembling, fabricating, and/or manufacturing, one or  
24 more of the Products for sale or use in the State of California.

25 15. Defendants Does 51-100 ("Distributor Defendants") are each persons doing  
26 business within the meaning of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.11.

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1           16. Distributor Defendants distribute, exchange, transfer, process, and/or transport one  
2 or more of the Products to individuals, businesses, or retailers for sale or use in the State of  
3 California.

4           17. Defendants Does 101-150 (“Retailer Defendants”) are each persons doing business  
5 within the meaning of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.11.

6           18. Retailer Defendants offer the Products for sale to individuals in the State of  
7 California and, in some circumstances, may also be manufacturers and/or distributors.

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

13           20. Y & S, Manufacturer Defendants, Distributor Defendants, and Retailer Defendants  
14 shall, where appropriate, collectively be referred to hereinafter as “DEFENDANTS.”

15   **VENUE AND JURISDICTION**

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

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

25           23. The California Superior Court has jurisdiction over DEFENDANTS based on  
26 plaintiff’s information and good faith belief that each defendant is a person, firm, corporation or  
27 association that either are citizens of the State of California, have sufficient minimum contacts in  
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1 the State of California, or otherwise purposefully avail themselves of the California market.  
2 DEFENDANTS' purposeful availment renders the exercise of personal jurisdiction by California  
3 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 Proposition 65 that  
9 they must be informed "about exposures to chemicals that cause cancer, birth defects and other  
10 reproductive harm." (*Cal. Health & Safety Code § 25249.6.*)

11 26. Proposition 65 states, "[n]o person in the course of doing business shall knowingly  
12 and intentionally expose any individual to a chemical known to the state to cause cancer or  
13 reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable warning to such individual..."  
14 (*Id.*)

15 27. On March 17, 2011, a 60-Day Notice of Violation, together with the requisite  
16 Certificate of Merit (the "Notice"), was provided to Y & S and various public enforcement  
17 agencies stating that as a result of DEFENDANTS' manufacture, distribution and/or sale of the  
18 Products, purchasers and users in the State of California were being exposed to DEHP resulting  
19 from the reasonably foreseeable uses of the Products, without the individual purchasers and users  
20 first having been provided with a "clear and reasonable warning" regarding such toxic exposures.

21 28. DEFENDANTS have engaged in the manufacture, importation, distribution, and/or  
22 offering of the Products for sale or use in violation of California Health & Safety Code  
23 § 25249.6 and DEFENDANTS' manufacture, importation, distribution, and/or offering of the  
24 Products for sale or use in violation of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 has continued  
25 to occur beyond Y & S's receipt of plaintiff's Notice. Plaintiff further alleges and believes that  
26 such violations will continue to occur into the future.

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

4           30. The Products manufactured, imported, distributed, and/or offered for sale or use in  
5 California by DEFENDANTS contained DEHP above the allowable state limits.

6           31. DEFENDANTS knew or should have known that the Products manufactured,  
7 imported, distributed, and/or offered for sale or use by DEFENDANTS in California contained  
8 DEHP.

9           32. DEHP was present in or on the Products in such a way as to expose individuals to  
10 DEHP through dermal contact and ingestion during the reasonably foreseeable use of the  
11 PRODUCTS.

12           33. The normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the Products has caused and  
13 continues to cause consumer and workplace exposures to DEHP, as such exposure is defined by  
14 27 California Code of Regulations (“CCR”) § 25602(b).

15           34. DEFENDANTS had knowledge that the normal and reasonably foreseeable use of  
16 the Products would expose individuals to DEHP through dermal contact and ingestion.

17           35. DEFENDANTS intended that such exposures to DEHP from the reasonably  
18 foreseeable use of the Products would occur by their deliberate, non-accidental participation in  
19 the manufacture, importation, distribution, and/or offer for sale or use of Products to individuals  
20 in the State of California.

21           36. DEFENDANTS failed to provide a “clear and reasonable warning” to those  
22 consumers and/or other individuals in the State of California who were or who could become  
23 exposed to DEHP through dermal contact and ingestion during the reasonably foreseeable use of  
24 the Products.

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

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

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

**PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

Wherefore, plaintiff prays for judgment against DEFENDANTS as follows:

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


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

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- 3. That the Court grant plaintiff his reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of suit; and
- 4. That the Court grant such other and further relief as may be just and proper.

Dated: September 20 , 2011

Respectfully Submitted,  
THE CHANLER GROUP

By:   
Troy C. Bailey  
Attorney for Plaintiff  
Anthony E. Held, PH.D., P.E.