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

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

16 Plaintiff,

17 v.

18 CHA DIRECT, INC.; and DOES 1-150,
19 inclusive,

20 Defendants.

Case No. CIV 1106342

**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES
AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

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

FILED
DEC 30 2011
KIM TURNER, Court Executive Officer
MARIN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
By: D. Taylor Deputy

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 ("DEHP"), a toxic
5 chemical found in belts sold in California.

6 2. By this Complaint, plaintiff seeks to remedy defendants' continuing failure to
7 warn California citizens about reproductive toxicity associated with their exposure to DEHP
8 present in or on certain belts that defendants manufacture, import, distribute, and/or offer for
9 sale to consumers throughout the state of California.

10 3. High levels of DEHP are commonly found in and on the belts that defendants
11 manufacture, import, distribute, and/or offer for sale to consumers throughout the state of
12 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"), "[n]o person in the
15 course of doing business shall knowingly and intentionally expose any individual to a chemical
16 known to the state to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and
17 reasonable warning to such individual ..." (Cal. Health & Safety Code, § 25249.6.)

18 5. On October 24, 2003, California identified and listed DEHP as a chemical known
19 to cause birth defects and other reproductive harm. DEHP became subject to the "clear and
20 reasonable warning" requirements of Proposition 65 one year later on October 24, 2004. (Tit.
21 27 Cal. Code Regs. ("CCR") § 27001(c); Cal. Health & Safety Code §§ 25249.8 &
22 25249.10(b).)

23 6. Defendants manufacture, import, distribute, and/or offer for sale belts containing
24 excessive levels of DEHP including, but not limited to, *Trés Jolie Pants with Belt, Charcoal,*
25 *SM1833, #23633985.* All such belts containing DEHP shall hereinafter be referred to as the
26 "PRODUCTS."

27 7. Defendants' failure to warn consumers and/or other individuals in the state of
28 California not covered by California's Occupational Safety Health Act, Labor Code § 6300 *et*

1 *seq.* about their exposure to DEHP and its potential to cause birth defects and other reproductive
2 harm in conjunction with Defendants' distribution, importation, manufacturing, and/or sale of
3 the PRODUCTS is a violation of Proposition 65 and subjects Defendants to enjoinder of such
4 conduct as well as civil penalties for each such violation.

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

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

11 **PARTIES**

12 10. Plaintiff, ANTHONY E. HELD, Ph.D., P.E., is a citizen of the state of California
13 who is dedicated to protecting the health of California citizens through the elimination or
14 reduction of toxic exposures from consumer products; he brings this action in the public interest
15 pursuant to California Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(d).

16 11. Defendant CHA DIRECT, INC. ("CHA") is a person in the course of doing
17 business within the meaning of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.11.

18 12. Defendant CHA manufactures, imports, distributes, and/or offers the PRODUCTS
19 for sale or use in the state of California, or implies by its conduct that it manufactures, imports
20 distributes, and/or offers the PRODUCTS for sale or use in the state of California.

21 13. Defendants DOES 1-50 ("MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS") are each
22 persons in the course of doing business within the meaning of California Health & Safety Code
23 § 25249.11.

24 14. MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS engage in the process of researching,
25 testing, designing, assembling, fabricating, and/or manufacturing, or imply by their conduct that
26 they engage in the process of researching, testing, designing, assembling, fabricating, and/or
27 manufacturing, one or more of the PRODUCTS offered for sale or use in the state of California.
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2 15. Defendants DOES 51-100 ("DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS") are each persons
3 in the course of doing business within the meaning of California Health & Safety Code §
4 25249.11.

5 16. DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS distribute, exchange, transfer, process, and/or
6 transport one or more of the PRODUCTS to individuals, businesses, or retailers for sale or use
7 in the state of California.

8 17. Defendants DOES 101-150 ("RETAILER DEFENDANTS") are each persons in
9 the course of doing business within the meaning of California Health & Safety Code §
10 25249.11.

11 18. RETAILER DEFENDANTS offer the PRODUCTS for sale to individuals in the
12 state of California.

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

18 20. CHA, MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS, DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS,
19 and RETAILER DEFENDANTS shall, where appropriate, collectively be referred to as
20 "DEFENDANTS."

21 **VENUE AND JURISDICTION**

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

27 22. The California Superior Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to
28 California Constitution Article VI, § 10, which grants the Superior Court "original jurisdiction

1 in all causes except those given by statute to other trial courts.” The statute under which this
2 action is brought does not specify any other basis of subject matter jurisdiction.

3 23. The California Superior Court has jurisdiction over DEFENDANTS based on
4 plaintiff’s information and good faith belief that each defendant is a person, firm, corporation,
5 or association that is a citizen of the state of California, has sufficient minimum contacts in the
6 state of California, or otherwise purposefully avails itself of the California market.
7 DEFENDANTS’ purposeful availment renders the exercise of personal jurisdiction by
8 California courts consistent with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.

9 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

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

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

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

17 26. Proposition 65 states, “[n]o person in the course of doing business shall
18 knowingly and intentionally expose any individual to a chemical known to the state to cause
19 cancer or reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable warning to such
20 individual....” (*Ibid.*)

21 27. On or about September 19, 2011, a sixty-day notice of violation, together with the
22 requisite certificate of merit, was provided to CHA and various public enforcement agencies
23 stating that, as a result of the DEFENDANTS’ sales of the PRODUCTS, purchasers and users in
24 the state of California were being exposed to DEHP resulting from the reasonably foreseeable
25 use of the PRODUCTS, without the individual purchasers and users first having been provided
26 with a “clear and reasonable warning” regarding such toxic exposures.

27 28. DEFENDANTS have engaged in the manufacture, import, distribution, and/or
28 offering of the PRODUCTS for sale or use in violation of California Health & Safety Code §

1 25249.6, and DEFENDANTS' manufacture, importation, distribution, and/or offering of the
2 PRODUCTS for sale or use in violation of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 has
3 continued to occur beyond DEFENDANTS' receipt of plaintiff's sixty-day notice of violation.
4 Plaintiff further alleges and believes that such violations will continue to occur into the future.

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

8 30. The PRODUCTS manufactured, imported, distributed, and/or offered for sale or
9 use in California by DEFENDANTS contained DEHP in an amount above the allowable state
10 limits.

11 31. DEFENDANTS knew or should have known that the PRODUCTS manufactured,
12 imported, distributed, and/or offered for sale or use in California contained DEHP.

13 32. DEHP was present in or on the PRODUCTS in such a way as to expose
14 individuals to DEHP through dermal contact and/or ingestion during the reasonably foreseeable
15 use of the PRODUCTS.

16 33. The normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS has caused, and
17 continues to cause, consumer exposures to DEHP, as such exposure is defined by Title 27 CCR
18 § 25602(b).

19 34. DEFENDANTS had knowledge that the normal and reasonably foreseeable use of
20 the PRODUCTS would expose individuals to DEHP through dermal contact and/or ingestion.

21 35. DEFENDANTS intended that such exposures to DEHP from the reasonably
22 foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS would occur by their deliberate, non-accidental participation
23 in the manufacture, import, distribution, and/or offering of the PRODUCTS for sale or use to
24 individuals in the state of California.

25 36. DEFENDANTS failed to provide a "clear and reasonable warning" to those
26 consumers and/or other individuals in the state of California who were, or who could become
27 exposed to DEHP through dermal contact and/or ingestion during the reasonably foreseeable
28 use of the PRODUCTS.

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/or ingestion resulting from the reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS sold by DEFENDANT'S without a "clear and reasonable warning," have suffered, and continue to suffer, irreparable harm for which 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, importing, distributing, and/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 exposure 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: December 29, 2011

Respectfully Submitted,
THE CHANLER GROUP

By: 
Christopher M. Martin
Attorney for Plaintiff
ANTHONY E. HELD, Ph.D., P.E.