

1 Clifford A. Chanler, State Bar No. 135534  
2 Gregory M. Sheffer, State Bar No. 173124  
3 THE CHANLER GROUP  
4 81 Throckmorton Ave., Suite 202  
5 Mill Valley, CA 94941  
6 Telephone: 415.388.0911  
7 Facsimile: 415.388.9911

8 Attorneys for Plaintiff  
9 ANTHONY HELD, PH.D.

**FILED**

**JUL 12 2012**

KIM TURNER, Court Executive Officer  
MARIN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT  
By: K. Yarborough, Deputy

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

13 ANTHONY HELD, PH.D.,

14 Plaintiff,

15 v.

16 ROSS ACQUISITION CO. and DOES 1-150,

17 Defendants.

Case No. CIV 1203199

**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES AND  
INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

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

1 NATURE OF THE ACTION

2 1. This Complaint is a representative action brought by plaintiff ANTHONY HELD,  
3 PH.D., 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 Di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate ("DEHP"), a toxic chemical  
5 found in the components of certain of defendants' plush stuffed animal toys manufactured,  
6 distributed and/or otherwise sold by defendants in California.

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

12 3. On October 24, 2003, the State listed Di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate as a chemical  
13 known to cause birth defects and other reproductive harm. DEHP became subject to the  
14 warning requirement one year later and was therefore subject to the "clear and reasonable  
15 warning" requirements of Proposition 65, beginning on October 24, 2004. (*27 CCR § 27001(c);*  
16 *Cal. Health & Safety Code § 25249.8.*)

17 4. DEHP shall hereinafter be referred to as the "LISTED CHEMICAL."

18 5. Significant levels of the LISTED CHEMICAL have been discovered in or plush  
19 stuffed animal toys composed of, or with components composed of material containing DEHP,  
20 including, but not limited to, Galerie Plush Bear, Dale Jr. 88, Item #211023134. All such plush  
21 stuffed animal toys containing the LISTED CHEMICAL shall hereinafter be referred to as the  
22 "PRODUCTS."

23 6. Defendants' failure to warn consumers and/or other individuals in the State of  
24 California about their exposures to the LISTED CHEMICAL in conjunction with defendants'  
25 sale of the PRODUCTS is a violation of Proposition 65.

26 7. For defendants' violations of Proposition 65, plaintiff seeks preliminary and  
27 permanent injunctive relief to compel defendants to provide purchasers or users of the  
28

1 PRODUCTS with the required warning regarding the health hazards of the LISTED  
2 CHEMICAL. (*Cal. Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(a).*)

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

5 **PARTIES**

6 9. Plaintiff ANTHONY HELD, PH.D. is a citizen of the State of California who is  
7 dedicated to protecting the health of California citizens through the elimination or reduction of  
8 toxic exposures from consumer products, and brings this action in the public interest pursuant  
9 to California Health & Safety Code Section 25249.7.

10 10. Defendant ROSS ACQUISITION CO. ("ROSS ACQUISITION") is a person doing  
11 business within the meaning of California Health & Safety Code Section 25249.11.

12 11. Defendant ROSS ACQUISITION manufactures, distributes, and/or offers the  
13 PRODUCTS for sale or use in the State of California or implies by its conduct that it  
14 manufactures, distributes, and/or offers the PRODUCTS for sale or use in the State of  
15 California.

16 12. Defendants DOES 1-50 ("MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS") are each persons  
17 doing business within the meaning of California Health & Safety Code Section 25249.11.

18 13. MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS engage in the process of research, testing,  
19 designing, assembling, fabricating and/or manufacturing, or imply by their conduct that they  
20 engage in the process of research, testing, designing, assembling, fabricating, and/or  
21 manufacturing, one or more of the PRODUCTS for sale or use in the State of California.

22 14. Defendants DOES 51-100 ("DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS") are each persons  
23 doing business within the meaning of California Health & Safety Code Section 25249.11.

24 15. DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS distribute, exchange, transfer, process and/or  
25 transport one or more of the PRODUCTS to individuals, businesses or retailers for sale or use  
26 in the State of California.

27 16. Defendants DOES 101-150 ("RETAIL DEFENDANTS") are each persons doing  
28 business within the meaning of California Health & Safety Code Section 25249.11.

1 17. RETAIL DEFENDANTS offer the PRODUCTS for sale to individuals in the State  
2 of California.

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

9 19. ROSS ACQUISITION, MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS, DISTRIBUTOR  
10 DEFENDANTS, and RETAIL DEFENDANTS shall, where appropriate, collectively be referred  
11 to hereinafter as "DEFENDANTS".

#### 12 VENUE AND JURISDICTION

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

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

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

28 ///

1 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

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

3 23. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference, as if fully set forth herein,  
4 Paragraphs 1 through 22, inclusive.

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

9 25. On January 31, 2012, a sixty-day notice of violation ("60-Day Notice"), together  
10 with the requisite Certificate of Merit, was provided to ROSS ACQUISITION and various  
11 public enforcement agencies stating that as a result of the ROSS ACQUISITION's manufacture,  
12 distribution and sales of the PRODUCTS, purchasers and users in the State of California are  
13 being exposed to DEHP resulting from the reasonably foreseeable uses of the PRODUCTS,  
14 without the individual purchasers and users first having been provided with a "clear and  
15 reasonable warning" regarding such toxic exposures.

16 26. DEFENDANTS have engaged in the manufacture, distribution, and/or offering  
17 of the PRODUCTS for sale or use in violation of California Health & Safety Code Section  
18 25249.6 and DEFENDANTS' manufacture, distribution, and/or offering of the PRODUCTS for  
19 sale or use in violation of California Health & Safety Code Section 25249.6 has continued to  
20 occur beyond ROSS ACQUISITION's receipt of plaintiff's 60-Day Notice. Plaintiff further  
21 alleges and believes that such violations will continue to occur into the future.

22 27. After receipt of the claims asserted in the 60-Day Notice, the appropriate public  
23 enforcement agencies have failed to commence and diligently prosecute a cause of action  
24 against DEFENDANTS under Proposition 65.

25 28. The PRODUCTS manufactured, distributed, and/or offered for sale or use in  
26 California by DEFENDANTS, contain the LISTED CHEMICAL.

27 29. DEFENDANTS knew or should have known that the PRODUCTS contained the  
28 LISTED CHEMICAL.

1           30.    The LISTED CHEMICAL is present in or on the PRODUCTS in such a way as to  
2   expose individuals to the LISTED CHEMICAL, as such exposure is defined by 27 CCR Section  
3   25602(b), through dermal contact and/or ingestion during or as a consequence of the  
4   reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS.

5           31.    DEFENDANTS knew or should have known that the reasonably foreseeable use  
6   of the PRODUCTS exposes individuals to the LISTED CHEMICAL through dermal contact  
7   and/or ingestion.

8           32.    DEFENDANTS' participation in the manufacture, distribution and/or offer for  
9   sale or use of PRODUCTS to individuals in the State of California was deliberate and non-  
10   accidental.

11          33.    DEFENDANTS failed to provide a "clear and reasonable warning" to those  
12   consumers and/or other individuals in the State of California who were or who could become  
13   exposed to the LISTED CHEMICAL during the reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS.

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

19          35.    As a consequence of the above-described acts, DEFENDANTS are liable for a  
20   maximum civil penalty of \$2,500 per day for each violation of Proposition 65 pursuant to  
21   California Health & Safety Code Section 25249.7(b).

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

25   PRAYER FOR RELIEF

26          Wherefore, plaintiff prays for judgment against DEFENDANTS, and each of them, as  
27   follows:

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

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

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

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

11  
12 Dated: July 12 2012

Respectfully submitted,

THE CHANLER GROUP

13  
14  
15 By: 

Gregory M. Sheffer  
Attorneys for Plaintiff  
ANTHONY HELD, PH.D.