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FILED
ALAMEDA COUNTY

JUL 15 2014

CLERK OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
By Cheryl Clark Deputy

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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF ALAMEDA
UNLIMITED CIVIL JURISDICTION

DR. WHITNEY R. LEEMAN,

Plaintiff,

v.

LEGRAND HOLDINGS, INC., and DOES 1-150, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No. RG 14732923

COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

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

VIA FAX

1 NATURE OF THE ACTION

2 1. This Complaint is a representative action brought by plaintiff DR. WHITNEY R.
3 LEEMAN, 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 vinyl/PVC cord protectors sold in California.

6 2. By this Complaint, plaintiff seeks to remedy defendants’ continuing failure to
7 warn California citizens about the risk of exposure to DEHP present in and on the vinyl/PVC
8 cord protectors manufactured, distributed, and offered for sale or use to consumers throughout
9 the State of California.

10 3. Detectable levels of DEHP are commonly found in and on the vinyl/PVC cord
11 protectors that defendants manufacture, distribute, and offer for sale to consumers throughout
12 the State of California.

13 4. Under the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, codified at
14 Health and Safety Code section 25249.6 *et seq.* (“Proposition 65”), “[n]o person in the course of
15 doing business shall knowingly and intentionally expose any individual to a chemical known to
16 the state to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable
17 warning to such individual” Health & Safety Code § 25249.6.

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

23 6. Defendants manufacture, distribute, import, sell, and/or offer for sale vinyl/PVC
24 cord protectors containing DEHP as follows:

25 a. Defendants manufacture, distribute, import, sell, and/or offer for sale
26 vinyl/PVC cord protectors containing DEHP without a warning, including, but not
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1 limited to, the *Wiremold | Legrand Conduct Cord Protector, CDI-5, UPC# 0-86698*
2 *87011 8*.

3 7. All such vinyl/PVC cord protectors containing DEHP, described above in
4 paragraph 6(a), shall hereinafter be referred to as the “PRODUCTS.”

5 8. Defendants’ failure to warn consumers and other individuals in the State of
6 California about their exposure to the LISTED CHEMICAL in conjunction with defendants’
7 sales of the PRODUCTS is a violation of Proposition 65, and subjects defendants to enjoinder
8 of such conduct as well as civil penalties for each violation. Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(a)
9 & (b)(1).

10 9. For defendants’ violations of Proposition 65, plaintiff seeks preliminary and
11 permanent injunctive relief to compel defendants to provide purchasers or users of the
12 PRODUCTS with the required warning regarding the health hazards of the LISTED
13 CHEMICAL. Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(a).

14 10. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(b), plaintiff also seeks civil
15 penalties against defendants for their violations of Proposition 65.

16 **PARTIES**

17 11. Plaintiff DR. WHITNEY R. LEEMAN is a citizen of the State of California who
18 is dedicated to protecting the health of California citizens through the elimination or reduction
19 of toxic exposures from consumer products; and she brings this action in the public interest
20 pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(d).

21 12. Defendant LEGRAND HOLDINGS, INC. (“LEGRAND”) is a person in the
22 course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code section 25249.11.

23 13. LEGRAND manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the
24 PRODUCTS for sale or use in the State of California, or implies by its conduct that it
25 manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the PRODUCTS for sale or use in the
26 State of California.

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1 14. Defendants DOES 1-50 (“MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS”) are each
2 persons in the course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code section
3 25249.11.

4 15. MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS research, test, design, assemble, fabricate,
5 and manufacture, or imply by their conduct that they research, test, design, assemble, fabricate,
6 and manufacture one or more of the PRODUCTS offered for sale or use in the State of
7 California.

8 16. Defendants DOES 51-100 (“DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS”) are each a person
9 in the course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code section 25249.11.

10 17. DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS distribute, exchange, transfer, process, and/or
11 transport one or more of the PRODUCTS to individuals, businesses, or retailers for sale or use
12 in the State of California.

13 18. Defendants DOES 101-150 (“RETAILER DEFENDANTS”) are each a person in
14 the course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code section 25249.11.

15 19. RETAILER DEFENDANTS offer the PRODUCTS for sale to individuals in the
16 State of California.

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

22 21. LEGRAND, MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS, DISTRIBUTOR
23 DEFENDANTS, and RETAILER DEFENDANTS shall, where appropriate, collectively be
24 referred to as “DEFENDANTS.”

25 **VENUE AND JURISDICTION**

26 22. Venue is proper in the Alameda County Superior Court, pursuant to Code of Civil
27 Procedure sections 393, 395, and 395.5, because this Court is a court of competent jurisdiction,
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1 because plaintiff seeks civil penalties against DEFENDANTS, because one or more instances of
2 wrongful conduct occurred, and continue to occur, in Alameda County, and/or because
3 DEFENDANTS conducted, and continue to conduct, business in this county with respect to the
4 PRODUCTS.

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

9 24. The California Superior Court has jurisdiction over DEFENDANTS based on
10 plaintiff’s information and good faith belief that each defendant is a person, firm, corporation or
11 association that is a citizen of the State of California, has sufficient minimum contacts in the
12 State of California, and/or otherwise purposefully avails itself of the California market.
13 DEFENDANTS’ purposeful availing renders the exercise of personal jurisdiction by California
14 courts consistent with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.

15 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

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

17 25. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference, as if fully set forth herein,
18 Paragraphs 1 through 24, inclusive.

19 26. In enacting Proposition 65, in the preamble to the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic
20 Enforcement Act of 1986, the People of California expressly declared their right “[t]o be
21 informed about exposures to chemicals that cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive
22 harm.”

23 27. Proposition 65 states, “[n]o person in the course of doing business shall
24 knowingly and intentionally expose any individual to a chemical known to the state to cause
25 cancer or reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable warning to such
26 individual” Health & Safety Code § 25249.6.

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1 28. On February 24, 2014, plaintiff's sixty-day notice of violation, together with the
2 requisite certificate of merit, was provided to LEGRAND and certain public enforcement
3 agencies stating that, as a result of DEFENDANTS' sales of the PRODUCTS containing the
4 LISTED CHEMICAL, purchasers and users in the State of California were being exposed to the
5 LISTED CHEMICAL resulting from their reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS,
6 without the individual purchasers and users first having been provided with a "clear and
7 reasonable warning" regarding such toxic exposures, as required by Proposition 65.

8 29. DEFENDANTS have engaged in the manufacture, importation, distribution, sale,
9 and offering of the PRODUCTS for sale or use in violation of Health and Safety Code section
10 25249.6, and DEFENDANTS' violations have continued to occur beyond their receipt of
11 plaintiff's sixty-day notice of violation. As such, DEFENDANTS' violations are ongoing and
12 continuous in nature, and will continue to occur in the future.

13 30. After receiving plaintiff's sixty-day notice of violation, the appropriate public
14 enforcement agencies have failed to commence and diligently prosecute a cause of action
15 against DEFENDANTS under Proposition 65.

16 31. The PRODUCTS manufactured, imported, distributed, sold, and offered for sale
17 or use in California by DEFENDANTS contain the LISTED CHEMICAL such that they require
18 a "clear and reasonable" warning under Proposition 65.

19 32. DEFENDANTS knew or should have known that the PRODUCTS they
20 manufacture, import, distribute, sell, and offer for sale or use in California contain the LISTED
21 CHEMICAL.

22 33. The LISTED CHEMICAL is present in or on the PRODUCTS in such a way as to
23 expose individuals to the LISTED CHEMICAL through dermal contact and/or ingestion during
24 reasonably foreseeable use.

25 34. The normal and reasonably foreseeable uses of the PRODUCTS have caused, and
26 continue to cause, consumer exposures to the LISTED CHEMICAL, as such exposures are
27 defined by title 27 of the California Code of Regulations, section 25602(b).

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1 35. DEFENDANTS had knowledge that the normal and reasonably foreseeable uses
2 of the PRODUCTS expose individuals to the LISTED CHEMICAL through dermal contact
3 and/or ingestion.

4 36. DEFENDANTS intended that such exposures to the LISTED CHEMICAL from
5 the reasonably foreseeable uses of the PRODUCTS would occur by their deliberate, non-
6 accidental participation in the manufacture, importation, distribution, sale, and offering of the
7 PRODUCTS for sale or use to individuals in the State of California.

8 37. DEFENDANTS failed to provide a “clear and reasonable warning” to those
9 consumers and other individuals in the State of California who were or who would become
10 exposed to the LISTED CHEMICAL through dermal contact and/or ingestion during the
11 reasonably foreseeable uses of the PRODUCTS.

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

17 39. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(b), as a consequence of the
18 above-described acts, DEFENDANTS are liable for a maximum civil penalty of \$2,500 per day
19 for each violation.

20 40. As a consequence of the above-described acts, Health and Safety Code
21 section 25249.7(a) also specifically authorizes the Court to grant injunctive relief against
22 DEFENDANTS.

23 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

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


25 1. That the Court, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(b), assess
26 civil penalties against DEFENDANTS in the amount of \$2,500 per day for each violation;
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- 2. That the Court, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(a), preliminarily and permanently enjoin DEFENDANTS from manufacturing, distributing, or offering the PRODUCTS for sale or use in California without first providing a “clear and reasonable warning” as defined by title 27 of the California Code of Regulations, section 25601 *et seq.*, as to the harms associated with exposures the LISTED CHEMICAL;
- 3. That the Court grant plaintiff her 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: July 15, 2014

Respectfully Submitted,
THE CHANLER GROUP

By: 
Jonathan A. Bornstein
Attorneys for Plaintiff
DR. WHITNEY R. LEEMAN