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11 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
12 COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA  
13 UNLIMITED CIVIL JURISDICTION

14 LAURENCE VINOUCUR,

15 Plaintiff,

16 v.

17 CLEARONE, INC.; and DOES 1-150,  
18 inclusive,

19 Defendants.

20 Case No. \_\_\_\_\_

21 **COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES  
22 AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

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

24 **ENDORSED**

25 2014 SEP 24 P 12:51

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By: S. ACKARD  
Clerk of the Superior Court  
County of Santa Clara

114CV271013

1 NATURE OF THE ACTION

2 1. This Complaint is a representative action brought by plaintiff LAURENCE  
3 VINOCUR in the public interest of the citizens of the State of California to enforce the People’s  
4 right to be informed about exposures to di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate (“DEHP”), a toxic chemical  
5 that is found in and on the vinyl/PVC cords of headsets that are sold in California.

6 2. By this Complaint, plaintiff seeks to remedy defendants’ continuing failure to  
7 warn California citizens about the risks of exposures to DEHP present in and on the vinyl/PVC  
8 cords of headsets 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 cords of  
11 headsets that defendants import, manufacture, distribute, ship, sell and/or offer for sale to  
12 consumers throughout 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. On October 24, 2003, California listed DEHP pursuant to Proposition 65 as a  
19 chemical that is known to cause birth defects or 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).

23 6. Defendants manufacture, distribute, import, sell, and offer for sale without  
24 warning in California, headsets with vinyl/PVC cords containing DEHP, including, but not  
25 limited to, the *ClearOne Chat 20D Premium USB Headset, P/N: 910-000-20D, UPC #6 71010*  
26 *00004* 7. All such headsets with vinyl/PVC cords containing DEHP are referred to collectively  
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1 hereinafter as the “PRODUCTS.” DEHP is referred to hereinafter as the “LISTED  
2 CHEMICAL.”

3 7. Defendants’ failure to warn workers, consumers, and other individuals in  
4 California of the harms associated with exposures to the LISTED CHEMICAL in conjunction  
5 with defendants’ sales of the PRODUCTS containing the LISTED CHEMICAL constitute  
6 violations of Proposition 65, and subject defendants to enjoinder of such conduct, as well as  
7 civil penalties for each violation. Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(a) & (b)(1).

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

12 9. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(b), plaintiff also seeks civil  
13 penalties against defendants, and each of them, for each violation of Proposition 65.

14 **PARTIES**

15 10. Plaintiff LAURENCE VINOCUR is a citizen of the State of California who is  
16 dedicated to protecting the health of California citizens through the elimination or reduction of  
17 harmful exposures to toxic chemicals from consumer products. He brings this action in the  
18 public interest pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(d).

19 11. Defendant CLEARONE, INC. (“CLEARONE”) is a person in the course of doing  
20 business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code sections 25249.6 and 25249.11.

21 12. CLEARONE manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the  
22 PRODUCTS for sale or use in the State of California, or it implies by its conduct that it  
23 manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the PRODUCTS for sale or use in the  
24 State of California.

25 13. Defendants DOES 1-50 (“MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS”) are each a  
26 person in the course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code sections  
27 25249.6 and 25249.11.

1           14.   MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS research, test, design, assemble, fabricate,  
2 and manufacture, or imply by their conduct that they research, test, design, assemble, fabricate,  
3 and manufacture one or more of the PRODUCTS offered for sale or use in the State of  
4 California.

5           15.   Defendants DOES 51-100 (“DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS”) are each a person  
6 in the course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code sections 25249.6  
7 and 25249.11.

8           16.   DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS distribute, exchange, transfer, process, and  
9 transport one or more of the PRODUCTS to individuals, businesses, or retailers for sale or use  
10 in the State of California.

11          17.   Defendants DOES 101-150 (“RETAILER DEFENDANTS”) are each a person in  
12 the course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code sections 25249.6  
13 and 25249.11.

14          18.   RETAILER DEFENDANTS offer the PRODUCTS for sale to individuals in the  
15 State of California.

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

21          20.   CLEARONE, MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS, DISTRIBUTOR  
22 DEFENDANTS, and RETAILER DEFENDANTS are hereinafter collectively referred to as  
23 “DEFENDANTS.”

1 **VENUE AND JURISDICTION**

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

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

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

18 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

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

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

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

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

3 27. On July 11, 2014, plaintiff’s sixty-day notice of violation, together with the  
4 requisite certificate of merit, was provided to CLEARONE and certain public enforcement  
5 agencies stating that, as a result of DEFENDANTS’ sales of the PRODUCTS containing the  
6 LISTED CHEMICAL, workers, consumers, and other individuals in the State of California  
7 were being exposed to the LISTED CHEMICAL resulting from their reasonably foreseeable use  
8 of the PRODUCTS, without the individual purchasers and users first having received a “clear  
9 and reasonable warning” regarding such toxic exposures, as required by Proposition 65.

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

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

18 30. The PRODUCTS manufactured, imported, distributed, sold, and offered for sale  
19 or use in California by DEFENDANTS contain the LISTED CHEMICAL in such a way that the  
20 reasonably foreseeable uses of these products result in exposures that require a “clear and  
21 reasonable” warning under Proposition 65.

22 31. DEFENDANTS knew or should have known that the PRODUCTS they  
23 manufacture, import, distribute, sell, and offer for sale or use in California contain the LISTED  
24 CHEMICAL.

25 32. The LISTED CHEMICAL is present in or on the PRODUCTS in such a way as to  
26 expose individuals through dermal contact and/or ingestion during reasonably foreseeable use.  
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1           33. The normal and reasonably foreseeable uses of the PRODUCTS have caused, and  
2 continue to cause, consumer exposures to the LISTED CHEMICAL, as such exposures are  
3 defined by title 27 of the California Code of Regulations, section 25602(b).

4           34. DEFENDANTS have knowledge that the normal and reasonably foreseeable uses  
5 of the PRODUCTS expose individuals to the LISTED CHEMICAL through dermal contact  
6 and/or ingestion.

7           35. DEFENDANTS intend for such exposures to the LISTED CHEMICAL from the  
8 reasonably foreseeable uses of the PRODUCTS to occur by their deliberate, non-accidental  
9 participation in the manufacture, distribution, sale, and offering of the PRODUCTS for sale or  
10 use to individuals in the State of California.

11           36. DEFENDANTS failed to provide a “clear and reasonable warning” to those  
12 workers, consumers and other individuals in California not covered by California’s  
13 Occupational Safety Health Act, Labor Code section 6300 *et seq.* who have been, or will be,  
14 exposed to the LISTED CHEMICAL.

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

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

24           39. As a consequence of the above-described acts, Health and Safety Code  
25 section 25249.7(a) also specifically authorizes the Court to grant injunctive relief against  
26 DEFENDANTS.

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1 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

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

3 1. That the Court, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(b), assess  
4 civil penalties against DEFENDANTS, and each of them, in the amount of \$2,500 per day for  
5 each violation;


6 2. That the Court, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(a),  
7 preliminarily and permanently enjoin DEFENDANTS from manufacturing, distributing, or  
8 offering the PRODUCTS for sale or use in California without first providing a “clear and  
9 reasonable warning” as defined by title 27 of the California Code of Regulations, section 25601  
10 *et seq.*, as to the harms associated with exposures to the LISTED CHEMICAL;

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

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

13 Dated: September 23, 2014

14 Respectfully Submitted,  
15 THE CHANLER GROUP

16   
17 By: \_\_\_\_\_  
18 Brian C. Johnson, Esq.  
19 Attorneys for Plaintiff  
20 LAURENCE VINOCUR  
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