

1 Josh Voorhees, State Bar No. 241436
2 THE CHANLER GROUP
3 2560 Ninth Street
4 Parker Plaza, Suite 214
5 Berkeley, CA 94710-2565
6 Telephone: (510) 848-8880
7 Facsimile: (510) 848-8118

8 Attorneys for Plaintiff
9 PAUL WOZNAK

ENDORSED
FILED
ALAMEDA COUNTY

APR 16 2015

CLERK OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
By Lilly Tran

10 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

11 COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

12 UNLIMITED CIVIL JURISDICTION

13
14 PAUL WOZNAK,
15 Plaintiff,
16
17 v.
18 ACME INTERNATIONAL ENTERPRISES,
19 INC.; and DOES 1-150, inclusive,
20 Defendants.

Case No. RG15766676

**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES
AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

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

1 NATURE OF THE ACTION

2 1. This Complaint is a representative action brought by plaintiff PAUL WOZNIAK
3 in the public interest of the citizens of the State of California to enforce the People’s right to be
4 informed about exposures to 4,4’-methylenedianiline (“4,4’-MDA”), a toxic chemical that is
5 found in nylon cooking utensils 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 4,4’-MDA present in and on the nylon
8 cooking utensils manufactured, distributed, and offered for sale or use to consumers throughout
9 the State of California.

10 3. Detectable levels of 4,4’-MDA are commonly found in and on components of
11 nylon cooking utensils that defendants import, manufacture, distribute, ship, sell and/or offer for
12 sale to 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 January 1, 1988, California listed 4,4’-MDA pursuant to Proposition 65 as a
19 chemical that is known to cause cancer. 4,4’-MDA became subject to the “clear and reasonable
20 warning” requirements of the act one year later on January 1, 1989. Cal. Code Regs. tit. 27, §
21 27001(b); Health & Safety Code §§ 25249.8 & 25249.10(b). 4,4’-MDA is referred to
22 hereinafter as the “LISTED CHEMICAL.”

23 6. Defendants manufacture, distribute, import, sell, and offer for sale without
24 warning in California, nylon cooking utensils containing the LISTED CHEMICAL, including,
25 but not limited to, the *Acme Kitchen Gear Essential Gear 5 Mini Tools (Spoon)*, #94330, UPC
26 No. 0 72898 94330 1. All such nylon cooking utensils containing the LISTED CHEMICAL are
27 referred to collectively hereinafter as the “PRODUCTS.”
28

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

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

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

PARTIES

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

16 11. Defendant ACME INTERNATIONAL ENTERPRISES, INC. (“ACME”) is a
17 person in the course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code sections
18 25249.6 and 25249.11.

19 12. ACME manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the PRODUCTS for
20 sale or use in the State of California, or it implies by its conduct that it manufactures, imports,
21 distributes, sells, and/or offers the PRODUCTS for sale or use in the State of California.

22 13. Defendants DOES 1-50 (“MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS”) are each a
23 person in the course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code sections
24 25249.6 and 25249.11.

25 14. MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS research, test, design, assemble, fabricate,
26 and manufacture, or imply by their conduct that they research, test, design, assemble, fabricate,
27
28

1 and manufacture one or more of the PRODUCTS offered for sale or use in the State of
2 California.

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

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

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

12 18. RETAILER DEFENDANTS offer the PRODUCTS for sale to individuals in the
13 State of California.

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

19 20. ACME, MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS, DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS,
20 and RETAILER DEFENDANTS are hereinafter collectively referred to as “DEFENDANTS.”

21 **VENUE AND JURISDICTION**

22 21. Venue is proper in the County of Alameda, pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure
23 sections 393, 395, and 395.5, because this Court is a court of competent jurisdiction, because
24 plaintiff seeks civil penalties against DEFENDANTS, because one or more instances of
25 wrongful conduct occurred, and continue to occur, in this county, and/or because
26 DEFENDANTS conducted, and continue to conduct, business in Alameda county with respect
27 to the PRODUCTS.
28

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

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

11 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

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

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

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

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

23 27. On January 23, 2015, plaintiff’s sixty-day notice of violation, together with the
24 requisite certificate of merit, was provided to ACME and certain public enforcement agencies
25 stating that, as a result of DEFENDANTS’ sales of the PRODUCTS containing the LISTED
26 CHEMICAL, consumers, and other individuals in the State of California were being exposed to
27 the LISTED CHEMICAL resulting from their reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS,
28

1 without the individual purchasers and users first having received a “clear and reasonable
2 warning” regarding such toxic exposures, as required by Proposition 65.

3 28. DEFENDANTS have engaged in the manufacture, importation, distribution, sale,
4 and offering of the PRODUCTS for sale or use in violation of Health and Safety Code section
5 25249.6, and DEFENDANTS’ violations have continued to occur beyond their receipt of
6 plaintiff’s sixty-day notice of violation. As such, DEFENDANTS’ violations are ongoing and
7 continuous in nature, and will continue to occur in the future.

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

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

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

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

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

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

26 35. DEFENDANTS intend for such exposures to the LISTED CHEMICAL from the
27 reasonably foreseeable uses of the PRODUCTS to occur by their deliberate, non-accidental
28

1 participation in the manufacture, distribution, sale, and offering of the PRODUCTS for sale or
2 use to individuals in the State of California.

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

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

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

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

19 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

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

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

24 2. That the Court, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(a),
25 preliminarily and permanently enjoin DEFENDANTS from manufacturing, distributing, or
26 offering the PRODUCTS for sale or use in California without first providing a “clear and
27
28

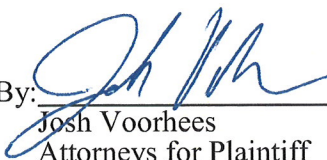
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

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 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: April 16, 2015

Respectfully Submitted,
THE CHANLER GROUP

By: 

Josh Voorhees
Attorneys for Plaintiff
PAUL WOZNIAK