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ENDORSED
FILED
ALAMEDA COUNTY

JUL 15 2015

CLERK OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
By Marla Carrera
Marla Carrera, Deputy

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

LAURENCE VINO CUR,

Plaintiff,

v.

ROSS STORES, INC. and DOES 1-150,
inclusive,

Defendants

) Case No. RG15777968

) **COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES
AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

) (Health & Safety Code § 25249.5 *et seq.*)

1 NATURE OF THE ACTION

2 1. This Complaint is a representative action brought by plaintiff LAURENCE
3 VINOCUR (“VINOCUR”) in the public interest of the citizens of the State of California to
4 enforce the People’s right to be informed of the health hazards caused by exposures to di(2-
5 ethylhexyl)phthalate (“DEHP”), a toxic chemical found in vinyl/PVC toiletry bags sold by
6 defendants in California.

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

11 3. Detectable levels of DEHP are found in and on vinyl/PVC toiletry bags that
12 defendants manufacture, distribute, and/or offer for sale to consumers and other individuals
13 throughout the State of California.

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

19 5. Pursuant to Proposition 65, on October 24, 2003, California identified and listed
20 DEHP as a chemical known to cause birth defects (and reproductive harm). DEHP became
21 subject to the “clear and reasonable warning” requirements of the act one year later on October
22 24, 2004. Cal. Code Regs. tit. 27, § 27001(c); Health & Safety Code §§ 25249.8 &
23 25249.10(b).

24 6. Defendants manufacture, distribute, import, sell, and/or offer for sale without
25 health hazard warnings in California, vinyl/PVC toiletry bags containing DEHP such as, but not
26 limited to, the *Dermasil Treatment Set, UPC #34576 00796 1* collectively hereinafter as
27 “PRODUCTS.”
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1 7. Defendants’ failure to warn consumers and other individuals in the State of
2 California of the health hazards associated with exposures to DEHP in conjunction with
3 defendants’ sales of the PRODUCTS are violations of Proposition 65, and subject defendants,
4 and each of them, to enjoinder of such conduct as well as civil penalties for each violation.
5 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 DEHP. 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 for their violations of Proposition 65.

12 **PARTIES**

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

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

19 12. ROSS manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the PRODUCTS for
20 sale or use in the State of California, or 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,
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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. ROSS, MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS, DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS,
20 and RETAILER DEFENDANTS shall, where appropriate, collectively be referred to as
21 “DEFENDANTS.”

22 **VENUE AND JURISDICTION**

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

1 DEFENDANTS conducted, and continue to conduct, business in Alameda County with respect
2 to the PRODUCTS.

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

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

13 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

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

15 24. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference, as if fully set forth herein,
16 Paragraphs 1 through 23, inclusive.

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

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

25 27. On March 13, 2015, plaintiff served a sixty-day notice of violation, together with
26 the requisite certificate of merit, on ROSS and certain public enforcement agencies alleging
27 that, as a result of DEFENDANTS’ sales of the PRODUCTS containing DEHP, purchasers and
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1 users in the State of California were being exposed to DEHP resulting from their reasonably
2 foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS, without the individual purchasers and users first having
3 been provided with a “clear and reasonable warning” regarding the harms associated with such
4 exposures, as required by Proposition 65.

5 28. DEFENDANTS manufacture, import, distribute, sell, and offer the PRODUCTS
6 for sale or use in violation of Health and Safety Code section 25249.6, and DEFENDANTS’
7 violations have continued beyond their receipt of plaintiff’s sixty-day notice of violation.
8 DEFENDANTS’ violations are ongoing and continuous in nature, and, as such, will continue in
9 the future.

10 29. After receiving plaintiff’s sixty-day notice of violation, none of the appropriate
11 public enforcement agencies have commenced and diligently prosecuted a cause of action
12 against DEFENDANTS under Proposition 65 to enforce the alleged violations that are the
13 subject of plaintiff’s notice of violation.

14 30. The PRODUCTS that DEFENDANTS manufacture, import, distribute, sell, and
15 offer for sale or use in California cause exposures to DEHP as a result of the reasonably
16 foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS. Such exposures caused by DEFENDANTS and endured by
17 consumers and other individuals in California are not exempt from the “clear and reasonable”
18 warning requirements of Proposition 65, yet DEFENDANTS provide no warning.

19 31. DEFENDANTS knew or should have known that the PRODUCTS they
20 manufactured, imported, distributed, sold, and offered for sale or use in California contained
21 DEHP.

22 32. DEHP is present in or on the PRODUCTS in such a way as to expose individuals
23 to DEHP through dermal contact and/or ingestion during reasonably foreseeable use.

24 33. The normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS has caused, and
25 continues to cause, consumer exposures to DEHP, as defined by title 27 of the California Code
26 of Regulations, section 25602(b).

1 34. DEFENDANTS had knowledge that the normal and reasonably foreseeable use of
2 the PRODUCTS exposed individuals to DEHP through dermal contact and/or ingestion.

3 35. DEFENDANTS intended that exposures to DEHP from the reasonably
4 foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS would occur by their deliberate, non-accidental participation
5 in the manufacture, importation, distribution, sale, and offering of the PRODUCTS for sale or
6 use to consumers and other individuals in California.

7 36. DEFENDANTS failed to provide a “clear and reasonable warning” to those
8 consumers and other individuals in California who were or who would become exposed to
9 DEHP through dermal contact and/or ingestion resulting from their use of the PRODUCTS.

10 37. Contrary to the express policy and statutory prohibition of Proposition 65 enacted
11 directly by California voters, individuals exposed to DEHP through dermal contact and/or
12 ingestion as a result of their use of the PRODUCTS that DEFENDANTS sold without a “clear
13 and reasonable” health hazard warning, have suffered, and continue to suffer, irreparable harm
14 for which they have no plain, speedy, or adequate remedy at law.

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

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

21 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

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

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

26 2. That the Court, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(a),
27 preliminarily and permanently enjoin DEFENDANTS from manufacturing, distributing, or
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1 offering the PRODUCTS for sale or use in California without first providing a “clear and
2 reasonable warning” in accordance with title 27 of the California Code of Regulations, section
3 25601 *et seq.*, regarding the harms associated with exposures to DEHP;


4 3. That the Court, Pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(a), issue
5 preliminary and permanent injunctions mandating that DEFENDANTS recall all PRODUCTS
6 currently in the chain of commerce in California without a “clear and reasonable warning” as
7 defined by California Code of Regulations title 27, section 25601 *et seq.*;

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

9 5. That the Court grant such other and further relief as may be just and proper.

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11 Dated: July 14, 2015

Respectfully Submitted,
THE CHANLER GROUP

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14 By: 
15 Jonathan Bornstein
16 Attorneys for Plaintiff
17 LAURENCE VINO CUR