

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

Christopher F. Tuttle, State Bar No. 264545  
THE CHANLER GROUP  
2560 Ninth Street  
Parker Plaza, Suite 214  
Berkeley, CA 94710-2565  
Telephone: (510) 848-8880  
Facsimile: (510) 848-8118

Attorneys for Plaintiff  
ANTHONY E. HELD, PH.D., P.E.

ENDORSED  
FILED  
San Francisco County Superior Court

AUG 18 2015

CLERK OF THE COURT

BY: DENNIS TOYAMA  
Deputy Clerk

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
UNLIMITED CIVIL JURISDICTION

ANTHONY E. HELD, PH.D., P.E.,

Plaintiff,

v.

GENUINE PARTS COMPANY; S.P.  
RICHARDS COMPANY and DOES 1-150,  
inclusive,

Defendants.

CGC-15-547451

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

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 ANTHONY E.  
3 HELD, PH.D., P.E. in the public interest of the citizens of the State of California to enforce the  
4 People’s right to be informed of the health hazards caused by exposures to Diisononyl phthalate  
5 (“DINP”), a toxic chemical found in vinyl/PVC gloves sold by defendants in California.

6 2. By this Complaint, plaintiff seeks to remedy defendants’ continuing failure to  
7 warn individuals not covered by California’s Occupational Safety Health Act, Labor Code  
8 section 6300 et seq., who purchase, use or handle defendants’ products, about the risks of  
9 exposure to DINP present in and on its vinyl/PVC gloves that are manufactured, distributed, and  
10 offered for sale or use throughout the State of California. Individuals not covered by  
11 California’s Occupational Safety Health Act, Labor Code section 6300 et seq., who purchase,  
12 use or handle defendants’ products, are referred to hereinafter as “consumers”.

13 3. Detectable levels of DINP are found in and on the vinyl/PVC glovs that  
14 defendants manufacture, distribute, and offer for sale without a warning to consumers  
15 throughout the State of California.

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

21 5. Pursuant to Proposition 65, on December 20, 2013, California identified and listed  
22 DINP as a chemical known to cause cancer. DINP became subject to the “clear and reasonable  
23 warning” requirements of the act one year later on December 20, 2014. Cal. Code Regs. tit. 27,  
24 § 27001(b); Health & Safety Code §§ 25249.8 & 25249.10(b).

25 6. Defendants manufacture, distribute, import, sell, and offer for sale without health  
26 hazard warnings in California, vinyl/PVC gloves containing DINP including, but not limited to,  
27 the *Genuine Joe General Purpose Protection Vinyl Gloves, #15389, UPC #0 35255 15389 8*.  
28

1 All vinyl/PVC gloves containing DINP are referred to collectively hereinafter as  
2 “PRODUCTS.”

3 7. Defendants’ failure to warn consumers in the State of California of the health  
4 hazards associated with exposures to DINP in conjunction with defendants’ sales of the  
5 PRODUCTS are violations of Proposition 65, and subject defendants, and each of them, to  
6 enjoinder of such conduct as well as civil penalties for each violation. Health & Safety Code  
7 § 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 consumers of the PRODUCTS with  
10 the required warning regarding the health hazards associated with exposures to DINP. Health &  
11 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 for their violations of Proposition 65.

14 **PARTIES**

15 10. Plaintiff ANTHONY E. HELD, PH.D., P.E. is a citizen of the State of California  
16 who is dedicated to protecting the health of California citizens through the elimination or  
17 reduction of toxic exposures from consumer products; and he brings this action in the public  
18 interest pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(d).

19 11. Defendant GENUINE PARTS COMPANY (“GENUINE PARTS”) is a person in  
20 the course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code sections 25249.6  
21 and 25249.11.

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

1           13.     Defendant S.P. RICHARDS COMPANY (“S.P. RICHARDS”) is a person in the  
2 course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code sections 25249.6 and  
3 25249.11.

4           14.     S.P. RICHARDS manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the  
5 PRODUCTS for sale or use in the State of California, or implies by its conduct that it  
6 manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the PRODUCTS for sale or use in the  
7 State of California.

8           15.     Defendants DOES 1-50 (“MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS”) are each a  
9 person in the course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code sections  
10 25249.6 and 25249.11.

11           16.     MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS research, test, design, assemble, fabricate,  
12 and manufacture, or imply by their conduct that they research, test, design, assemble, fabricate,  
13 and manufacture one or more of the PRODUCTS offered for sale or use in the State of  
14 California.

15           17.     Defendants DOES 51-100 (“DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS”) are each persons  
16 in the course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code sections 25249.6  
17 and 25249.11.

18           18.     DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS distribute, exchange, transfer, process, and  
19 transport one or more of the PRODUCTS to individuals, businesses, or retailers for sale or use  
20 in the State of California.

21           19.     Defendants DOES 101-150 (“RETAILER DEFENDANTS”) are each a person in  
22 the course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code sections 25249.6  
23 and 25249.11.

24           20.     RETAILER DEFENDANTS offer the PRODUCTS for sale to individuals in the  
25 State of California.

26           21.     At this time, the true names of defendants DOES 1 through 150, inclusive, are  
27 unknown to plaintiff, who, therefore, sues said defendants by their fictitious names pursuant to  
28

1 Code of Civil Procedure section 474. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and on that basis  
2 alleges, that each of the fictitiously named defendants is responsible for the acts and occurrences  
3 alleged herein. When ascertained, their true names shall be reflected in an amended complaint.

4 22. DAS, MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS, DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS,  
5 and RETAILER DEFENDANTS shall, where appropriate, collectively be referred to as  
6 “DEFENDANTS.”

#### 7 VENUE AND JURISDICTION

8 23. Venue is proper in San Francisco County Superior Court, pursuant to Code of  
9 Civil Procedure sections 393, 395, and 395.5, because this Court is a court of competent  
10 jurisdiction, because plaintiff seeks civil penalties against DEFENDANTS, because one or more  
11 instances of wrongful conduct occurred, and continue to occur, in this county, and/or because  
12 DEFENDANTS conducted, and continue to conduct, business in San Francisco County with  
13 respect to the PRODUCTS.

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

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

#### 24 FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

##### 25 **(Violation of Proposition 65 - Against All Defendants)**

26 26. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference, as if fully set forth herein,  
27 Paragraphs 1 through 25, inclusive.

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

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

9           29. On March 31, 2015, plaintiff served a sixty-day notice of violation, together with  
10 the requisite certificate of merit, on GENUINE PARTS, S.P. RICHARDS and the requisite  
11 public enforcement agencies alleging that, as a result of DEFENDANTS’ sales of the  
12 PRODUCTS containing DINP, consumers in the State of California were being exposed to  
13 DINP resulting from their reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS, without the  
14 consumers first having been provided with a “clear and reasonable warning” regarding the  
15 harms associated with such exposures, as required by Proposition 65.

16           30. DEFENDANTS manufacture, import, distribute, sell, and offer the PRODUCTS  
17 for sale or use in violation of Health and Safety Code section 25249.6, and DEFENDANTS’  
18 violations have continued beyond their receipt of plaintiff’s sixty-day notice of violation.  
19 DEFENDANTS’ violations are ongoing and continuous in nature and, as such, will continue in  
20 the future.

21           31. After receiving plaintiff’s sixty-day notice of violation, no public enforcement  
22 agency has commenced and diligently prosecuted a cause of action against DEFENDANTS  
23 under Proposition 65 to enforce the alleged violations that are the subject of plaintiff’s notice of  
24 violation.

25           32. The PRODUCTS that DEFENDANTS manufacture, import, distribute, sell, and  
26 offer for sale or use in California cause exposures to DINP as a result of the reasonably  
27 foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS. Such exposures caused by DEFENDANTS and endured by  
28

1 consumers in California are not exempt from the “clear and reasonable” warning requirements  
2 of Proposition 65, yet DEFENDANTS provide no warning.

3 33. DEFENDANTS knew or should have known that the PRODUCTS they  
4 manufacture, import, distribute, sell, and offer for sale or use in California contain DINP.

5 34. DINP is present in or on the PRODUCTS in such a way as to expose consumers  
6 to DINP through dermal contact and/or ingestion during reasonably foreseeable use.

7 35. The normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS has caused, and  
8 continues to cause, consumer exposures to DINP, as defined by title 27 of the California Code  
9 of Regulations, section 25602(b).

10 36. DEFENDANTS know that the normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the  
11 PRODUCTS exposes consumers to DINP through dermal contact and/or ingestion.

12 37. DEFENDANTS intend that exposures to DINP from the reasonably foreseeable  
13 use of the PRODUCTS will occur by their deliberate, non-accidental participation in the  
14 manufacture, importation, distribution, sale, and offering of the PRODUCTS for sale or use to  
15 consumers in California.

16 38. DEFENDANTS failed to provide a “clear and reasonable warning” to those  
17 consumers in California who were or who would become exposed to DINP through dermal  
18 contact and/or ingestion resulting from their use of the PRODUCTS.

19 39. Contrary to the express policy and statutory prohibition of Proposition 65 enacted  
20 directly by California voters, consumers exposed to DINP through dermal contact and/or  
21 ingestion as a result of their use of the PRODUCTS that DEFENDANTS sell without a “clear  
22 and reasonable” health hazard warning, have suffered, and continue to suffer, irreparable harm  
23 for which they have no plain, speedy, or adequate remedy at law.

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

