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FILED

SEP 10 2015

JAMES M. LIM, Court Executive Officer
MARIN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
By: E. Chais, Deputy

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

JOHN MOORE,

Plaintiff,

v.

WRIGHT & MCGILL COMPANY; and
DOES 1 – 150, inclusive,

Defendants.

) Case No. CIV 1503343
)
) **COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES**
) **AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**
)
) (Health & Safety Code § 25249.5 *et seq.*)
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NATURE OF THE ACTION

1. This Complaint is a representative action brought by plaintiff ANTHONY E. HELD, PH.D., P.E. in the public interest of the citizens of the State of California to enforce the People's right to be informed of the health hazards caused by exposures to di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate ("DEHP"), a toxic chemical found in vinyl/PVC knife grips sold by defendants in California.

2. By this Complaint, plaintiff seeks to remedy defendants' continuing failure to warn individuals not covered by California's Occupational Safety Health Act, Labor Code § 6300 *et seq.*, who purchase, use or handle defendants' products, about the risks of exposure to DEHP present in and on the vinyl/PVC knife grips manufactured, distributed, and offered for sale or use throughout the State of California. Individuals not covered by California's Occupational Safety Health Act, Labor Code § 6300 *et seq.*, who purchase, use or handle defendants' products, are referred to hereinafter as "consumers."

3. Detectable levels of DEHP are found in and on the vinyl/PVC knife grips that defendants manufacture, distribute, and offer for sale to consumers throughout the State of California.

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

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

1 manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the PRODUCTS for sale or use in the
2 State of California.

3 13. Defendants DOES 1-50 ("MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS") are each a
4 person in the course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code § 25249.6
5 and § 25249.11.

6 14. MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS, and each of them, research, test, design,
7 assemble, fabricate, and manufacture, or each implies by its conduct that it researches, tests,
8 designs, assembles, fabricates, and manufactures one or more of the PRODUCTS offered for
9 sale or use in California.

10 15. Defendants DOES 51-100 ("DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS") are each a person
11 in the course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code § 25249.6 and §
12 25249.11.

13 16. DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS, and each of them, distribute, exchange,
14 transfer, process, and transport one or more of the PRODUCTS to individuals, businesses, or
15 retailers for sale or use in the State of California, or each implies by its conduct that it
16 distributes, exchanges, transfers, processes, and transports one or more of the PRODUCTS to
17 individuals, businesses, or retailers for sale or use in the State of California.

18 17. Defendants DOES 101-150 ("RETAILER DEFENDANTS") are each a person in
19 the course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code § 25249.6 and §
20 25249.11.

21 18. RETAILER DEFENDANTS, and each of them, offer the PRODUCTS for sale to
22 individuals in the State of California.

23 19. At this time, the true names of defendants DOES 1 through 150, inclusive, are
24 unknown to Plaintiffs, who, therefore, sue said defendants by their fictitious names pursuant to
25 Code of Civil Procedure § 474. Plaintiffs are informed and believe, and on that basis allege,
26 that each of the fictitiously named defendants is responsible for the acts and occurrences alleged
27 herein. When ascertained, their true names shall be reflected in an amended complaint.
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1 informed about exposures to chemicals that cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive
2 harm.”

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

7 27. On May 21, 2015, plaintiff served a sixty-day notice of violation, together with
8 the accompanying certificate of merit, on WRIGHT & MCGILL, the California Attorney
9 General’s Office, and the requisite public enforcement agencies alleging that, as a result of
10 DEFENDANTS’ sales of the PRODUCTS, consumers in the State of California are being
11 exposed to DEHP resulting from their reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS, without
12 the consumers first receiving a “clear and reasonable warning” regarding the harms associated
13 with exposures to DEHP, as required by Proposition 65.

14 28. DEFENDANTS manufacture, import, distribute, sell, and offer the PRODUCTS
15 for sale or use in violation of Health and Safety Code § 25249.6, and DEFENDANTS’
16 violations have continued beyond their receipt of plaintiff’s sixty-day notice of violation. As
17 such, DEFENDANTS’ violations are ongoing and continuous in nature and, unless enjoined
18 will continue in the future.

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

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

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1 31. DEFENDANTS knew or should have known that the PRODUCTS they
2 manufacture, import, distribute, sell, and offer for sale in California contain DEHP.

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

5 33. The normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS has caused, and
6 continues to cause, consumer exposures to DEHP, as defined by Title 27 of the California Code
7 of Regulations, § 25602(b).

8 34. DEFENDANTS know that the normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the
9 PRODUCTS exposes individuals to DEHP through dermal contact and/or ingestion.

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

14 36. DEFENDANTS failed to provide a “clear and reasonable warning” to those
15 consumers in California who have been, or who will be, exposed to DEHP through dermal
16 contact and/or ingestion resulting from their use of the PRODUCTS.

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

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

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

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3 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

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

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

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

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

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

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

19 Dated: September 9, 2015

Respectfully submitted,
THE CHANLER GROUP

20 By: Kimberly Gates
21 Kimberly Gates
22 Attorneys for Plaintiff
23 JOHN MOORE
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