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Josh Voorhees, State Bar No. 241436
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.,

EMPLOYED
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Sharon Ulleselt

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

ANTHONY E. HELD, PH.D., P.E.,
Plaintiff,
v.
WILLI HAHN CORPORATION; and DOES
1-150, inclusive,
Defendants.

Case No. 16CV289952
**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 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 about exposures to diisononyl phthalate (“DINP”), a toxic
5 chemical that is found in vinyl/PVC tool grips that are sold 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 vinyl/PVC gloves manufactured, distributed, and offered
10 for sale or use throughout the State of California. Individuals not covered by California’s
11 Occupational Safety Health Act, Labor Code section 6300 et seq. who purchase, use or handle
12 defendants’ products are referred to hereinafter as “consumers”.

13 3. Detectable levels of DINP are commonly found in and on components of
14 vinyl/PVC tool grips that defendants import, manufacture, distribute, ship, sell and/or offer for
15 sale to consumers 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. On December 20, 2013, California listed DINP pursuant to Proposition 65 as a
22 chemical that is 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). DINP is referred to hereinafter
25 as the “LISTED CHEMICAL.”

26 6. Defendants manufacture, distribute, import, sell, and offer for sale without
27 warning in California, vinyl/PVC tool grips containing the LISTED CHEMICAL, including, but
28

1 not limited to, the *Wiha Premium Tools Adjustable Pliers, Item No 32664, UPC #0 84705*
2 *32664 1*. All such vinyl/PVC tool grips containing the LISTED CHEMICAL are referred to
3 collectively hereinafter as the “PRODUCTS.”

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

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

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

15 **PARTIES**

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

20 11. Defendant WILLI HAHN CORPORATION (“WILLI”) is a person in the course
21 of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code sections 25249.6 and
22 25249.11.

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

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1 13. Defendants DOES 1-50 (“MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS”) are each a
2 person in the course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code sections
3 25249.6 and 25249.11.

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

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

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

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

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

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

24 20. WILLI, MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS, DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS,
25 and RETAILER DEFENDANTS are hereinafter collectively referred to as “DEFENDANTS.”
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VENUE AND JURISDICTION

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

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

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

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

(Violation of Proposition 65 - Against All Defendants)

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

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

26. Proposition 65 states, “[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

1 cancer or reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable warning to such
2 individual” Health & Safety Code § 25249.6.

3 27. On August 10, 2015, plaintiff’s sixty-day notice of violation, together with the
4 requisite certificate of merit, was provided to WILLI, and certain public enforcement agencies
5 stating that, as a result of DEFENDANTS’ sales of the PRODUCTS containing the LISTED
6 CHEMICAL, consumers, and other individuals in the State of California were being exposed to
7 the LISTED CHEMICAL resulting from their reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS,
8 without the individual purchasers and users first having received a “clear and reasonable
9 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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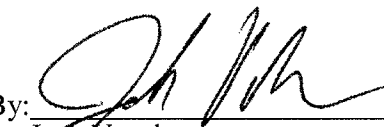
PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Wherefore, plaintiff prays for judgment against DEFENDANTS as follows:

1. That the Court, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(b), assess civil penalties against DEFENDANTS, and each of them, in the amount of \$2,500 per day for each violation;
2. That the Court, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(a), preliminarily and permanently enjoin DEFENDANTS from manufacturing, distributing, or offering the PRODUCTS for sale or use in California without first providing a “clear and 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: January 7, 2016

Respectfully Submitted,
THE CHANLER GROUP

By: 
Josh Voorhees
Attorneys for Plaintiff
ANTHONY E. HELD, PH.D., P.E.