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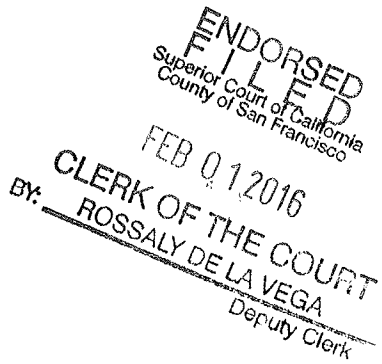

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

UNLIMITED CIVIL JURISDICTION

LAURENCE VINOCUR Plaintiff, v. BED BATH & BEYOND INC.; and DOES 1-150, inclusive, Defendants.	Case No. CGC 16-550192 **COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF** (Health & Safety Code § 25249.5 *et seq.*)

NATURE OF THE ACTION

1. This Complaint is a representative action brought by plaintiff LAURENCE VINOCUR 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 tris(1,3-dichloro-2-propyl) phosphate ("TDCPP"), a toxic chemical found in children's play tents sold by defendant 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 section 6300 et seq., who purchase, use or handle defendants' products, about the risks of exposure to TDCPP present in and on the children's play tents 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 section 6300 et seq., who purchase, use or handle defendants' products, are referred to hereinafter as "consumers."

3. Detectable levels of TDCPP are found in and on the children's play tents that defendants manufacture, distribute, and/or 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 section 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 28, 2011, California identified and listed TDCPP as a chemical known to cause birth defects (and reproductive harm). TDCPP became subject to the "clear and reasonable warning" requirements of the act one year later on October 28, 2012. Cal. Code Regs. tit. 27 § 27001(b); Health & Safety Code §§ 25249.8 & 25249.10(b).

6. Defendants manufacture, distribute, import, sell, and offer for sale without health hazard warnings in California, children's play tents containing TDCPP including, but not

limited to, the *The Monster Factory VW Campervan Children's Pop Up g' Play Tent, VWPT01, UPC # 060016 406703.* All such children's play tents containing TDCPP are referred to collectively hereinafter as "PRODUCTS."

7. Defendants' failure to warn consumers in the State of California of the health hazards associated with exposures to TDCPP in conjunction with defendants' sales of the PRODUCTS are violations of Proposition 65, and subject defendants to enjoinment of such conduct as well as civil penalties for each violation. Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(a) & (b)(1).

8. For defendants' violations of Proposition 65, plaintiff seeks preliminary and permanent injunctive relief to compel defendants to provide consumers of the PRODUCTS with the required warning regarding the health hazards associated with exposures to TDCPP. Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(a).

9. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(b), plaintiff also seeks civil penalties against defendants for their violations of Proposition 65.

PARTIES

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

11. Defendant BED BATH & BEYOND INC. ("BED BATH & BEYOND") is a person in the course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code sections 25249.6 and 25249.11.

12. BED BATH & BEYOND manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the PRODUCTS for sale or use in the State of California, or implies by its conduct that it manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the PRODUCTS for sale or use in the State of California.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

20. BED BATH & BEYOND, MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS, DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS, and RETAILER DEFENDANTS are hereinafter collectively referred to as "DEFENDANTS."

VENUE AND JURISDICTION

21. Venue is proper in the San Francisco Superior Court, 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 San Francisco 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 DEFENDANTS are each 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 declare 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

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

27. On November 10, 2015, plaintiff served a sixty-day notice of violation, together with the accompanying certificate of merit, on BED BATH & BEYOND, the California Attorney General's Office, and the requisite public enforcement agencies alleging that, as a result of DEFENDANTS' sales of the PRODUCTS, consumers in the State of California are being exposed to TDCPP resulting from their reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS, without the consumers first receiving a "clear and reasonable warning" regarding the harms associated with exposures to TDCPP, as required by Proposition 65.

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

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

30. The PRODUCTS that DEFENDANTS manufacture, import, distribute, sell, and/or offer for sale or use in California cause exposures to TDCPP as a result of the reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS. Such exposures caused by DEFENDANTS and endured by consumers in California are not exempt from the "clear and reasonable" warning requirements of Proposition 65, yet DEFENDANTS provide no warning. DEFENDANTS' violations of Proposition 65, resulting from their failure to provide warnings to consumers exposed to TDCPP from the PRODUCTS have continued since as far back as November 10, 2012.

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

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

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

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

35. DEFENDANTS intend that consumers and other individuals in California will be exposed to TDCPP from the reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS by their deliberate, non-accidental participation in the manufacture, importation, distribution, sale, and offering of the PRODUCTS for sale or use to consumers in California.

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

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

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

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

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" in accordance with title 27 of the California Code of Regulations, section 25601 *et seq.*, regarding the harms associated with exposures to TDCPP;

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

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

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

Dated: January 27, 2016

Respectfully submitted,
THE CHANLER GROUP

By: _____
Brian C. Johnson
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LAURENCE VINOCUR