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Sherri R. Carter, Executive Officer/Clerk By: Judi Lara, Deputy

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ORIGINAL FILED

Superior Court of California

County of Los Anneles

OCT \2 1 2016

## SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

### **COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC., in the public interest,

Plaintiff,

v.

ISLAND PACIFIC DISTRIBUTION, INC., a California Corporation; KABABAYAN DEVELOPMENT, INC. D.B.A. ISLAND PACIFIC SUPERMARKET, a California Corporation; ANHING CORPORATION, a California Corporation; MONTALVAN SALES, INC. D.B.A. MONTALVAN'S SALES INC., a California Corporation; AMERICAN RANCH AND SEAFOOD

MARKETS, INC.; a California Corporation; FOODASIA INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION; a California Corporation; and DOES 1-20;

Defendants.

CASE NO.

BC 6 38 152

COMPLAINT FOR PENALTY AND INJUNCTION

Violation of Proposition 65, the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (Health & Safety Code, § 25249.5, et seq.)

ACTION IS AN UNLIMITED CIVIL CASE (exceeds \$25,000)

Plaintiff CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. alleges a cause of action against Defendants ISLAND PACIFIC DISTRIBUTION, INC.; KABABAYAN DEVELOPMENT, INC. D.B.A. ISLAND PACIFIC SUPERMARKET; ANHING CORPORATION; MONTALVAN SALES, INC. D.B.A. MONTALVAN'S SALES INC.; AMERICAN RANCH

COMPLAINT FOR VIOLATION OF PROPOSITION 65, THE SAFE DRINKING WATER AND TOXIC ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 1986 (HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE § 25249.5, ET SEQ.)

AND SEAFOOD MARKETS, INC.; FOODASIA INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION; and DOES 1-20 as follows:

#### THE PARTIES

- 1. Plaintiff CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. ("Plaintiff" or "CAG") is an organization qualified to do business in the State of California. CAG is a person within the meaning of Health and Safety Code section 25249.11, subdivision (a). CAG, acting as a private attorney general, brings this action in the public interest as defined under Health and Safety Code section 25249.7, subdivision (d).
- 2. Defendant ISLAND PACIFIC DISTRIBUTION, INC. ("ISLAND PACIFIC"), is a California Corporation doing business in the State of California at all relevant times herein.
- 3. Defendant KABABAYAN DEVELOPMENT, INC. D.B.A. ISLAND PACIFIC SUPERMARKET ("KABABAYAN"), is a California Corporation doing business in the State of California at all relevant times herein.
- 4. Defendant ANHING CORPORATION ("ANHING"), is a California Corporation doing business in the State of California at all relevant times herein.
- 5. Defendant MONTALVAN SALES, INC. D.B.A. MONTALVAN'S SALES INC. ("MONTALVAN"), is a California Corporation, doing business in the State of California at all relative times herein.
- 6. Defendant AMERICAN RANCH AND SEAFOOD MARKETS, INC. ("AMERICAN RANCH"), is a California Corporation doing business in the State of California at all relevant times herein.
- 7. Defendant FOODASIA INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION ("FOODASIA"), is a California Corporation doing business in the State of California at all relevant times herein.
- 8. Plaintiff is presently unaware of the true names and capacities of defendants DOES 1-20, and therefore sues these defendants by such fictitious names. Plaintiff will amend this complaint to allege their true names and capacities when ascertained. Plaintiff is

- informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each fictitiously named defendant is responsible in some manner for the occurrences herein alleged and the damages caused thereby.
- At all times mentioned herein, the term "Defendants" includes ISLAND PACIFIC, KABABAYAN, ANHING, MONTALVAN, AMERICAN RANCH, FOODASIA, and DOES 1-20.
- 10. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges that each of the Defendants at all times mentioned herein have conducted business within the State of California.
- 11. Upon information and belief, at all times relevant to this action, each of the Defendants, including DOES 1-20, was an agent, servant, or employee of each of the other Defendants. In conducting the activities alleged in this Complaint, each of the Defendants was acting within the course and scope of this agency, service, or employment, and was acting with the consent, permission, and authorization of each of the other Defendants. All actions of each of the Defendants alleged in this Complaint were ratified and approved by every other Defendant or their officers or managing agents. Alternatively, each of the Defendants aided, conspired with and/or facilitated the alleged wrongful conduct of each of the other Defendants.
- 12. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that at all relevant times, each of the Defendants was a person doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code section 25249.11, subdivision (b), and that each of the Defendants had ten (10) or more employees at all relevant times.

#### **JURISDICTION**

13. The Court has jurisdiction over this lawsuit 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. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7, which allows enforcement of violations of Proposition 65 in any Court of competent jurisdiction.

- 14. This Court has jurisdiction over Defendants named herein because Defendants either reside or are located in this State or are foreign corporations authorized to do business in California, are registered with the California Secretary of State, or who do sufficient business in California, have sufficient minimum contacts with California, or otherwise intentionally avail themselves of the markets within California through their manufacture, distribution, promotion, marketing, or sale of their products within California to render the exercise of jurisdiction by the California courts permissible under traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.
- 15. Venue is proper in the County of Los Angeles because one or more of the instances of wrongful conduct occurred, and continues to occur, in the County of Los Angeles and/or because Defendants conducted, and continue to conduct, business in the County of Los Angeles with respect to the consumer product that is the subject of this action.

#### **BACKGROUND AND PRELIMINARY FACTS**

- 16. In 1986, California voters approved an initiative to address growing concerns about exposure to toxic chemicals and declared their right "[t]o be informed about exposures to chemicals that cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive harm." Ballot Pamp., Proposed Law, Gen. Elec. (Nov. 4, 1986) at p. 3. The initiative, The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, codified at Health and Safety Code sections 25249.5, et seq. ("Proposition 65"), helps to protect California's drinking water sources from contamination, to allow consumers to make informed choices about the products they buy, and to enable persons to protect themselves from toxic chemicals as they see fit.
- 17. Proposition 65 requires the Governor of California to publish a list of chemicals known to the state to cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive harm. *Health & Safety Code* § 25249.8. The list, which the Governor updates at least once a year, contains over 700 chemicals and chemical families. Proposition 65 imposes warning requirements and other controls that apply to Proposition 65-listed chemicals.

- 18. All businesses with ten (10) or more employees that operate or sell products in California must comply with Proposition 65. Under Proposition 65, businesses are: (1) prohibited from knowingly discharging Proposition 65-listed chemicals into sources of drinking water (*Health & Safety Code* § 25249.5), and (2) required to provide "clear and reasonable" warnings before exposing a person, knowingly and intentionally, to a Proposition 65-listed chemical (*Health & Safety Code* § 25249.6).
- 19. Proposition 65 provides that any person "violating or threatening to violate" the statute may be enjoined in any court of competent jurisdiction. *Health & Safety Code* § 25249.7. "Threaten to violate" means "to create a condition in which there is a substantial probability that a violation will occur." *Health & Safety Code* § 25249.11(e). Defendants are also liable for civil penalties of up to \$2,500.00 per day per violation, recoverable in a civil action. *Health & Safety Code* § 25249.7(b).
- 20. On February 27, 1987, the Governor of California added lead to the list of chemicals known to the State to cause reproductive toxicity (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 27, § 27001(c)). lead is known to the State to cause developmental, female, and male reproductive toxicity. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code sections 25249.9 and 25249.10, twenty (20) months after addition of lead to the list of chemicals known to the State to cause reproductive toxicity, lead became fully subject to Proposition 65 warning requirements and discharge prohibitions.
- 21. On October 1, 1992, the Governor of California added lead and lead compounds to the list of chemicals known to the State to cause cancer (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 27, § 27001(b)). Pursuant to Health and Safety Code sections 25249.9 and 25249.10, twenty (20) months after addition of lead and lead compounds to the list of chemicals known to the State to cause cancer, lead and lead compounds became fully subject to Proposition 65 warning requirements and discharge prohibitions.
- 22. Plaintiff identified certain practices of manufacturers and distributors of products bearing lead and lead compounds ("LEAD") of exposing, knowingly and intentionally, persons in California to the Proposition 65-listed chemicals of such products without first providing

clear and reasonable warnings of such to the exposed persons prior to the time of exposure. Plaintiff later discerned that Defendants engaged in such practice.

## SATISFACTION OF PRIOR NOTICE

- 23. On or about June 16, 2016 Plaintiff gave notice of alleged violations of Health and Safety Code section 25249.6, concerning consumer products exposures subject to a private action to ANHING, ISLAND PACIFIC, KABABAYAN and to the California Attorney General, County District Attorneys, and City Attorneys for each city containing a population of at least 750,000 people in whose jurisdictions the violations allegedly occurred, concerning the product Turmeric Powder, containing LEAD.
- 24. On or about June 16, 2016 Plaintiff gave notice of alleged violations of Health and Safety Code section 25249.6, concerning consumer products exposures subject to a private action to ISLAND PACIFIC, KABABAYAN, MONTALVAN and to the California Attorney General, County District Attorneys, and City Attorneys for each city containing a population of at least 750,000 people in whose jurisdictions the violations allegedly occurred, concerning the product Curry Powder, containing LEAD.
- 25. On or about May 25, 2016 Plaintiff gave notice of alleged violations of Health and Safety Code section 25249.6, concerning consumer products exposures subject to a private action to AMERICAN RANCH, FOODASIA, and to the California Attorney General, County District Attorneys, and City Attorneys for each city containing a population of at least 750,000 people in whose jurisdictions the violations allegedly occurred, concerning the product Assorted Agar Agar, containing LEAD.
- 26. Before sending the notice of alleged violations, Plaintiff investigated the consumer products involved, the likelihood that such products would cause users to suffer significant exposures to LEAD and the corporate structure of each of the Defendants.
- 27. Plaintiff's notice of alleged violation included a Certificate of Merit executed by the attorney for the noticing party, CAG. The Certificate of Merit stated that the attorney for Plaintiff who executed the certificate had consulted with at least one person with relevant

and appropriate expertise who reviewed data regarding the exposures to LEAD, the subject Proposition 65-listed chemicals of this action. Based on that information, the attorney for Plaintiff who executed the Certificate of Merit believed there was a reasonable and meritorious case for this private action. The attorney for Plaintiff attached to the Certificate of Merit served on the Attorney General the confidential factual information sufficient to establish the basis of the Certificate of Merit.

- 28. Plaintiff's notices of alleged violations also included a Certificate of Service and a document entitled "The Safe Drinking Water & Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (Proposition 65) A Summary." Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(d).
- 29. Plaintiff is commencing this action more than sixty (60) days from the dates that Plaintiff gave notices of the alleged violation to ISLAND PACIFIC, KABABAYAN, ANHING, MONTALVAN, AMERICAN RANCH, FOODASIA, and the public prosecutors referenced in Paragraphs 23-25.
- 30. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that neither the Attorney General, nor any applicable district attorney or city attorney has commenced and is diligently prosecuting an action against the Defendants.

#### FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

(By CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. and against ANHING, ISLAND PACIFIC, KABABAYAN, and DOES 1-20 for Violations of Proposition 65, The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (Health & Safety Code, §§ 25249.5, et seq.))

#### **Turmeric Powder**

31. Plaintiff CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. repeats and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 30 of this complaint as though fully set forth herein. Each of the Defendants is, and at all times mentioned herein was, a manufacturer, distributor, promoter, or retailer of Turmeric Powder, which includes but is not limited to ""Turmeric Powder"; "Bot Nghe:"; Net Weight: 4 ozs. (114 g.); "A Caravelle®"; "Ingredient: Turmeric 100%"; "Packed for: Anhing Corporation"; "Los Angeles, CA 90031,

USA"; "PRODUCT OF THAILAND"; UPC:0 80736 10890 4" ("TURMERIC POWDER").

- 32. TURMERIC POWDER contains LEAD.
- 33. Defendants knew or should have known that LEAD has been identified by the State of California as a chemical known to cause cancer and reproductive toxicity and therefore was subject to Proposition 65 warning requirements. Defendants were also informed of the presence of LEAD in TURMERIC POWDER within Plaintiff's notice of alleged violations further discussed above at Paragraph 23.
- 34. Plaintiff's allegations regarding TURMERIC POWDER concern "[c]onsumer products exposure[s]," which "is an exposure that results from a person's acquisition, purchase, storage, consumption, or other reasonably foreseeable use of a consumer good, or any exposure that results from receiving a consumer service." *Cal. Code Regs.* tit. 27, § 25602(b). TURMERIC POWDER is a consumer product, and, as mentioned herein, exposures to lead took place as a result of such normal and foreseeable consumption and use.
- 35. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that between June 16, 2013, and the present, each of the Defendants knowingly and intentionally exposed California consumers of TURMERIC POWDER, which Defendants manufactured, distributed, or sold as mentioned above, to LEAD without first providing any type of clear and reasonable warning of such to the exposed persons before the time of exposure.

  Defendants have distributed and sold TURMERIC POWDER in California. Defendants know and intend that California consumers will use and consume TURMERIC POWDER, thereby exposing them to LEAD. Defendants thereby violated Proposition 65.
- 36. The principal routes of exposure are through ingestion, dermal contact, and inhalation.

  Persons sustain exposures by eating and consuming TURMERIC POWDER, handling

  TURMERIC POWDER without wearing gloves or any other personal protective

  equipment, or by touching bare skin or mucous membranes with gloves after handling

TURMERIC POWDER, as well as through direct and indirect hand to mouth contact, hand to mucous membrane, or breathing in particulate matter dispersed from TURMERIC POWDER.

- 37. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each of Defendants' violations of Proposition 65 as to TURMERIC POWDER have been ongoing and continuous to the date of the signing of this complaint, as Defendants engaged and continue to engage in conduct which violates Health and Safety Code section 25249.6, including the manufacture, distribution, promotion, and sale of TURMERIC POWDER, so that a separate and distinct violation of Proposition 65 occurred each and every time a person was exposed to LEAD by TURMERIC POWDER as mentioned herein.
- 38. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each violation of Proposition 65 mentioned herein is ever continuing. Plaintiff further alleges and believes that the violations alleged herein will continue to occur into the future.
- 39. Based on the allegations herein, Defendants are liable for civil penalties of up to \$2,500.00 per day per individual exposure to LEAD from TURMERIC POWDER, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(b).
- 40. Plaintiff has engaged in good faith efforts to resolve the claims alleged herein prior to filing this Complaint.

### SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

(By CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. and against ISLAND PACIFIC, KABABAYAN, MONTALVAN, and DOES 1-20 for Violations of Proposition 65, The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (Health & Safety Code, §§ 25249.5, et seq.))

# **Curry Powder**

41. Plaintiff CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. repeats and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 40 of this complaint as though fully set forth herein. Each of the Defendants is, and at all times mentioned herein was, a manufacturer, distributor, promoter, or retailer of Curry Powder, which includes but is not limited to "Polynesian Treasures® Curry Powder 'The Perfect Seasoning'"; "Net Weight 8 oz. (227 gr)";

"Product of Fiji"; "Compliments all cooked foods, meals, poultry, and fish"; "Packed by: Montalvan's Sales, Inc. Ontario, CA 91761 (909)930-5670" UPC: 7 56869 00922 6 ("CURRY POWDER")

- 42. CURRYPOWDER contains LEAD.
- 43. Defendants knew or should have known that LEAD has been identified by the State of California as a chemical known to cause cancer and reproductive toxicity and therefore was subject to Proposition 65 warning requirements. Defendants were also informed of the presence of LEAD in CURRY POWDER within Plaintiff's notice of alleged violations further discussed above at Paragraph 24.
- 44. Plaintiff's allegations regarding CURRY POWDER concern "[c]onsumer products exposure[s]," which "is an exposure that results from a person's acquisition, purchase, storage, consumption, or other reasonably foreseeable use of a consumer good, or any exposure that results from receiving a consumer service." *Cal. Code Regs.* tit. 27, § 25602(b). CURRY POWDER is a consumer product, and, as mentioned herein, exposures to lead took place as a result of such normal and foreseeable consumption and use.
- 45. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that between June 16, 2013, and the present, each of the Defendants knowingly and intentionally exposed California consumers of CURRY POWDER, which Defendants manufactured, distributed, or sold as mentioned above, to LEAD without first providing any type of clear and reasonable warning of such to the exposed persons before the time of exposure. Defendants have distributed and sold CURRY POWDER in California. Defendants know and intend that California consumers will use and consume CURRY POWDER, thereby exposing them to LEAD. Defendants thereby violated Proposition 65.
- 46. The principal routes of exposure are through ingestion, dermal contact, and inhalation. Persons sustain exposures by eating and consuming CURRY POWDER, handling CURRY POWDER without wearing gloves or any other personal protective equipment, or by touching bare skin or mucous membranes with gloves after handling CURRY

- POWDER, as well as through direct and indirect hand to mouth contact, hand to mucous membrane, or breathing in particulate matter dispersed from CURRY POWDER.
- 47. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each of Defendants' violations of Proposition 65 as to CURRY POWDER have been ongoing and continuous to the date of the signing of this complaint, as Defendants engaged and continue to engage in conduct which violates Health and Safety Code section 25249.6, including the manufacture, distribution, promotion, and sale of CURRY POWDER, so that a separate and distinct violation of Proposition 65 occurred each and every time a person was exposed to LEAD by CURRY POWDER as mentioned herein.
- 48. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each violation of Proposition 65 mentioned herein is ever continuing. Plaintiff further alleges and believes that the violations alleged herein will continue to occur into the future.
- 49. Based on the allegations herein, Defendants are liable for civil penalties of up to \$2,500.00 per day per individual exposure to LEAD from CURRY POWDER, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(b).
- 50. Plaintiff has engaged in good faith efforts to resolve the claims alleged herein prior to filing this Complaint.

# THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

(By CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. and against AMERICAN RANCH, FOODASIA, and DOES 1-20 for Violations of Proposition 65, The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (Health & Safety Code, §§ 25249.5, et seq.))

# Assorted Agar Agar

51. Plaintiff CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. repeats and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 50 of this complaint as though fully set forth herein. Each of the Defendants is, and at all times mentioned herein was, a manufacturer, distributor, promoter, or retailer of Assorted Agar Agar, which includes but is not limited to AI Tropics Since 1970®; Assorted Agar Agar (Gulaman); "A Filipino Favorite!"; "Product

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- of the Philippines"; Net Weight 1.4oz (40g) 4 pieces; greed, orange, red, and yellow pieces; PFT/IP15-170; SKU: 0 30283 00648 2 ("AGAR").
- 52. AGAR contains LEAD.
- 53. Defendants knew or should have known that LEAD has been identified by the State of California as a chemical known to cause cancer and reproductive toxicity and therefore was subject to Proposition 65 warning requirements. Defendants were also informed of the presence of LEAD in AGAR within Plaintiff's notice of alleged violations further discussed above at Paragraph 25.
- 54. Plaintiff's allegations regarding AGAR concern "[c]onsumer products exposure[s]," which "is an exposure that results from a person's acquisition, purchase, storage, consumption, or other reasonably foreseeable use of a consumer good, or any exposure that results from receiving a consumer service." Cal. Code Regs. tit. 27, § 25602(b). AGAR is a consumer product, and, as mentioned herein, exposures to lead took place as a result of such normal and foreseeable consumption and use.
- 55. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that between May 25, 2013, and the present, each of the Defendants knowingly and intentionally exposed California consumers of AGAR, which Defendants manufactured, distributed, or sold as mentioned above, to LEAD without first providing any type of clear and reasonable warning of such to the exposed persons before the time of exposure. Defendants have distributed and sold AGAR in California. Defendants know and intend that California consumers will use and consume AGAR, thereby exposing them to LEAD. Defendants thereby violated Proposition 65.
- 56. The principal routes of exposure are through ingestion, dermal contact, and inhalation. Persons sustain exposures by eating and consuming AGAR, handling AGAR without wearing gloves or any other personal protective equipment, or by touching bare skin or mucous membranes with gloves after handling AGAR, as well as through direct and indirect hand to mouth contact, hand to mucous membrane, or breathing in particulate matter dispersed from AGAR.

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57	7. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each of Defendants' violations of
	Proposition 65 as to AGAR have been ongoing and continuous to the date of the signing
	of this complaint, as Defendants engaged and continue to engage in conduct which
	violates Health and Safety Code section 25249.6, including the manufacture, distribution
	promotion, and sale of AGAR, so that a separate and distinct violation of Proposition 65
	occurred each and every time a person was exposed to LEAD by AGAR as mentioned
	herein.

- 58. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each violation of Proposition 65 mentioned herein is ever continuing. Plaintiff further alleges and believes that the violations alleged herein will continue to occur into the future.
- 59. Based on the allegations herein, Defendants are liable for civil penalties of up to \$2,500.00 per day per individual exposure to LEAD from AGAR, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(b).
- 60. Plaintiff has engaged in good faith efforts to resolve the claims alleged herein prior to filing this Complaint.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Plaintiff demands against each of the Defendants as follows:

- 1. A permanent injunction mandating Proposition 65-compliant warnings;
- 2. Penalties pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7, subdivision (b);
- 3. Costs of suit;
- 4. Reasonable attorney fees and costs; and

5. Any further relief that the court may deem just and equitable.

Dated: October 21, 2016

YEROUSHALMI & YEROUSHLAMI

BY:

Reuben Yeroushalmi
Attorney for Plaintiff,
Consumer Advocacy Group, Inc.