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Attorneys for Plaintiff
LAURENCE VINO CUR

F I L E D

Superior Court of California
County of San Francisco

JAN 23 2017

CLERK OF THE COURT

BY: Adeline Kamo
Deputy Clerk

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

LAURENCE VINO CUR,

Plaintiff,

v.

JACOB ASH HOLDINGS, INC.; and DOES
1-150, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No. CGC-17-556627

**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES
AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

(Health & Safety Code § 25249.5 et seq.)

FILED

1 **NATURE OF THE ACTION**

2 1. This Complaint is a representative action brought by plaintiff Laurence Vinocur
3 in the public interest of the citizens of the State of California to enforce the People's right to be
4 informed of the health hazards caused by exposures to di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate (DEHP), a toxic
5 chemical found in gloves with vinyl/PVC components 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 DEHP present in and on gloves with vinyl/PVC components manufactured,
10 distributed, and offered for sale or use throughout the State of California. Individuals not
11 covered by California's Occupational Safety Health Act, Labor Code section 6300 et seq. who
12 purchase, use or handle defendants' products are referred to hereinafter as "consumers".

13 3. Detectable levels of DEHP are found in and on the gloves with vinyl/PVC
14 components that defendants manufacture, distribute, and offer for sale without a warning to
15 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 October 24, 2003, California listed DEHP pursuant to Proposition 65 as a
22 chemical that is known to cause birth defects and other reproductive harm. DEHP became
23 subject to the "clear and reasonable warning" requirements of the act one year later on October
24 24, 2004. Cal. Code Regs. tit. 27, § 27001(b); Health & Safety Code §§ 25249.8 &
25 25249.10(b).

26 6. Defendants manufacture, distribute, import, sell, and offer for sale without health
27 hazard warnings in California, gloves with vinyl/PVC components containing DEHP, including,
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1 but not limited to the *Hot Shot Gloves, Style: 25-615-IOM-LY, UPC #0 43552 01615 0*. All
2 gloves with vinyl/PVC components containing DEHP are referred to collectively hereinafter as
3 "PRODUCTS."

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

15 **PARTIES**

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

20 11. Defendant JACOB ASH HOLDINGS, INC. ("JACOB ASH") is a person in the
21 course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code sections 25249.6 and
22 25249.11.

23 12. JACOB ASH manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the
24 PRODUCTS for sale or use in the State of California, or implies by its conduct that it
25 manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the PRODUCTS for sale or use in the
26 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 persons
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. JACOB ASH, MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS, DISTRIBUTOR
25 DEFENDANTS, and RETAILER DEFENDANTS shall, where appropriate, collectively be
26 referred to as "DEFENDANTS."

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VENUE AND JURISDICTION

21. Venue is proper in San Francisco County 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 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."

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

5 27. **On September 29, 2016, plaintiff served a sixty-day notice of violation, together**
6 **with the requisite certificate of merit, on JACOB ASH and certain public enforcement agencies**
7 **alleging that, as a result of DEFENDANTS’ sales of the PRODUCTS containing DEHP,**
8 **consumers in the State of California were being exposed to DEHP resulting from their**
9 **reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS, without the consumers first having been**
10 **provided with a “clear and reasonable warning” regarding the harms associated with such**
11 **exposures, as required by Proposition 65.**

12 28. **DEFENDANTS manufacture, import, distribute, sell, and offer the PRODUCTS**
13 **for sale or use in violation of Health and Safety Code section 25249.6, and DEFENDANTS’**
14 **violations have continued beyond their receipt of Plaintiff’s sixty-day notice of violation.**
15 **DEFENDANTS’ violations are ongoing and continuous in nature and, as such, will continue in**
16 **the future.**

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

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

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

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

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

6 34. DEFENDANTS know that the normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the
7 PRODUCTS exposes consumers to DEHP through dermal contact and/or ingestion.

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

12 36. DEFENDANTS failed to provide a "clear and reasonable warning" to those
13 consumers in California who were or who would become exposed to DEHP through dermal
14 contact and/or ingestion resulting from their use of the PRODUCTS.

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

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

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

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1 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

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

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

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


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

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

16 5. That the Court grant such other and further relief as may be just and proper.
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18 Dated: January 20, 2017

19 Respectfully Submitted,
20 THE CHANLER GROUP

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22 By: 
23 Christopher Tuttle
24 Attorneys for Plaintiff
25 LAURENCE VINOUCUR
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