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ENDORSED  
FILED  
ALAMEDA COUNTY  
FEB - 5 2018

CLERK OF THE SUPERIOR COURT  
By Lanette Buffin, Deputy

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

10 GABRIEL ESPINOSA,  
11 Plaintiff,  
12 vs.  
13 O. MUSTAD & SON AMERICAS, INC.,  
14 Defendant.

Case No.: *RG* 8891885

**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES  
AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**  
  
(Violation of Health & Safety Code §25249.5  
*et seq.*)

18 Plaintiff Gabriel Espinosa ("Plaintiff"), by and through his attorneys, alleges the  
19 following cause of action in the public interest of the citizens of the State of California.

20 **BACKGROUND OF THE CASE**

21 1. Plaintiff brings this representative action on behalf of all California citizens to  
22 enforce relevant portions of Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, codified  
23 at the Health and Safety Code § 25249.5 *et seq* ("Proposition 65"), which reads, in relevant part,  
24 "[n]o person in the course of doing business shall knowingly and intentionally expose any  
25 individual to a chemical known to the state to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without first  
26 giving clear and reasonable warning to such individual ...". Health & Safety Code § 25249.6.

27 2. This complaint is a representative action brought by Plaintiff in the public interest  
28 of the citizens of the State of California to enforce the People's right to be informed of the health

**BY FAX**

1 hazards caused by exposure Di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP), a toxic chemical found in  
2 Mustad Dry Goods Duffle Bags sold and/or distributed by defendant O. Mustad & Son  
3 Americas, Inc. (“Defendant”) in California.

4 3. DEHP is a harmful chemical known to the State of California to cause cancer and  
5 reproductive toxicity. On January 1, 1988, the State of California listed DEHP as a chemical  
6 known to the State to cause cancer and DEHP has come under the purview of Proposition 65  
7 regulations since that time. Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 27, § 27001(c); Health & Safety Code §§  
8 25249.8 & 25249.10(b). On October 24, 2003, the State of California listed DEHP as a chemical  
9 known to cause reproductive toxicity. *Id.*

10 4. Proposition 65 requires all businesses with ten (10) or more employees that  
11 operate within California or sell products therein to comply with Proposition 65 regulations.  
12 Included in such regulations is the requirement that businesses must label any product containing  
13 a Proposition 65-listed chemical with a “clear and reasonable” warning before “knowingly and  
14 intentionally” exposing any person to it.

15 5. Proposition 65 allows for civil penalties of up to \$2,500.00 per day per violation  
16 to be imposed upon defendants in a civil action for violations of Proposition 65. Health & Safety  
17 Code § 25249.7(b). Proposition 65 also allows for any court of competent jurisdiction to enjoin  
18 the actions of a defendant which “violate or threaten to violate” the statute. Health & Safety  
19 Code § 25249.7.

20 6. Plaintiff alleges that Defendant manufactures, distributes, imports, sells and/or  
21 offers for sale in California, without the requisite exposure warning, Mustad Dry Goods Duffle  
22 Bags (the “Products”) that expose persons to DEHP.

23 7. Defendant’s failure to warn consumers and other individuals in California of the  
24 health hazards associated with exposure to DEHP in conjunction with the sale, manufacture,  
25 and/or distribution of the Products is a violation of Proposition 65 and subjects Defendant to the  
26 enjoinder and civil penalties described herein.

27 8. Plaintiff seeks civil penalties against Defendant for its violations of Proposition  
28 65 in accordance with Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(b).



1 State of California, and/or has otherwise purposefully availed itself of the California market.  
2 Such purposeful availment has rendered the exercise of jurisdiction by California courts  
3 consistent and permissible with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.

4 **SATISFACTION OF NOTICE REQUIREMENTS**

5 16. On December 29, 2016, Plaintiff gave notice of alleged violation of Health and  
6 Safety Code § 25249.6 (the "Notice") to Defendant concerning the exposure of California  
7 citizens to DEHP contained in the Products without proper warning, subject to a private action to  
8 Defendant and to the California Attorney General's office and the offices of the County District  
9 attorneys and City Attorneys for each city with a population greater than 750,000 persons  
10 wherein the herein violations allegedly occurred.

11 17. The Notice complied with all procedural requirements of Proposition 65 including  
12 the attachment of a Certificate of Merit affirming that Plaintiff's counsel had consulted with at  
13 least one person with relevant and appropriate expertise who reviewed relevant data regarding  
14 DEHP exposure, and that counsel believed there was meritorious and reasonable cause for a  
15 private action.

16 18. After receiving the Notice, and to Plaintiff's best information and belief, none of  
17 the noticed appropriate public enforcement agencies have commenced and diligently prosecuted  
18 a cause of action against Defendant under Proposition 65 to enforce the alleged violations which  
19 are the subject of Plaintiff's notice of violation.

20 19. Plaintiff is commencing this action more than sixty (60) days from the date of the  
21 Notice to Defendant, as required by law.

22 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

23 **(By Plaintiff against Defendant for the Violation of Proposition 65)**

24 20. Plaintiff hereby repeats and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 19 of  
25 this complaint as though fully set forth herein.

26 21. Defendant have, at all times mentioned herein, acted as manufacturer, distributor,  
27 and/or retailer of the Product.

1           22.     The Products contain DEHP, a hazardous chemical found on the Proposition 65  
2 list of chemicals known to be hazardous to human health.

3           23.     The Products do not comply with the Proposition 65 warning requirements.

4           24.     Plaintiff, based on his best information and belief, avers that at all relevant times  
5 herein, and at least since November 1, 2016, continuing until the present, that Defendant has  
6 continued to knowingly and intentionally expose California users and consumers of the Product  
7 to DEHP without providing required warnings under Proposition 65.

8           25.     The exposures that are the subject of this notice result from the purchase,  
9 acquisition, handling and recommended use of the product. Consequently, the primary route of  
10 exposure to these chemicals is through dermal exposure. Dermal exposure through the user's  
11 hands is possible during insertion and removal of items into the dry boat bag, and during routine  
12 handling of the dry boat bag. It is anticipated during normal, expected use that the product will  
13 come into contact with water or humidity and should the user touch the wet dry boat bag,  
14 aqueous DEHP skin permeation rates have been reported to be faster than neat DEHP  
15 permeation. The product can be expected to emit gas phase DEHP into the air over the lifetime  
16 of the product. Items placed within the gear bag can become contaminated with DEHP and  
17 dermal exposure is possible when these contaminated articles are handled or worn. If  
18 consumable items without a protective skin/wrapping are placed inside the waterproof gear bag,  
19 DEHP can contaminate the surface of these items and when the item is consumed, DEHP  
20 ingestion will occur. Finally, while mouthing of the product does not seem likely, some amount  
21 of exposure through ingestion can occur by touching the product, with subsequent touching of  
22 the user's hand to mouth.

23           26.     Plaintiff, based on his best information and belief, avers that such exposures will  
24 continue every day until clear and reasonable warnings are provided to Product purchasers and  
25 users or until this known toxic chemical is removed from the Product.

26           27.     Defendant have knowledge that the normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the  
27 Product exposes individuals to DEHP, and Defendant intend that exposures to DEHP will occur  
28

1 by their deliberate, non-accidental participation in the manufacture, importation, distribution,  
2 sale and offering of the Product to consumers in California

3 28. Plaintiff has engaged in good faith efforts to resolve the herein claims prior to this  
4 Complaint.

5 29. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(b), as a consequence of the above  
6 described acts, Defendant is liable for a maximum civil penalty of \$2,500 per day per violation.

7 30. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(a), this Court is specifically  
8 authorized to grant injunctive relief in favor of Plaintiff and against Defendant.

9 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

10 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendant and requests the  
11 following relief:

- 12 A. That the court assess civil penalties against Defendant in the amount of
- 13 \$2,500 per day for each violation in accordance with Health and Safety
- 14 Code § 25249.7(b);
- 15 B. That the court preliminarily and permanently enjoin Defendant mandating
- 16 Proposition 65 compliant warnings on the Product;
- 17 C. That the court grant Plaintiff reasonable attorney's fees and costs of suit.
- 18 D. That the court grant any further relief as may be just and proper.

19 Dated: February 2, 2018

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