

1 Daniel N. Greenbaum, Esq. (SBN 268104)
2 LAW OFFICE OF DANIEL N. GREENBAUM
3 The Hathaway Building
4 7120 Hayvenhurst Ave., Suite 320
5 Van Nuys CA 91406
6 Telephone: (818) 809-2199
7 Facsimile: (424) 243-7689
8 Email: dgreenbaum@greenbaumlawfirm.com

9 Attorney for Shefa LMV, INC.

ENDORSED
FILED
ALAMEDA COUNTY

FEB 16 2018

CLERK OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
By: D. OLIVER, Deputy

10 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

11 COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

12 SHEFA LMV, INC.,

13 Plaintiff,

14 vs.

15 THE FLETCHER-TERRY COMPANY;
16 HOT HEADZ INTERNATIONAL, INC;
17 ROPE KING USA, LLC; and DOES 1
18 through 100, Inclusive,

19 Defendants.

) Unlimited Jurisdiction

) CASE NO. RG18893464

) COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTY AND
) INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

) (Health & Safety Code § 25249.5 et seq.)

) TOXIC TORT/ENVIRONMENTAL

1 Plaintiff, Shefa LMV, INC., hereby alleges:

2
3 **I. PRELIMINARY STATEMENT**

4 1. This complaint seeks to remedy the failure of Defendants to warn persons of exposure
5 to Di[2-Ethylhexyl] Phthalate (“DEHP”), a chemical known to the State of California to cause cancer
6 and/or reproductive harm.

7 2. Under the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, Health & Safety
8 Code § 25249.6 (also known as “Proposition 65”) businesses must provide persons with a “clear and
9 reasonable warning” before exposing individuals to chemicals known to the state to cause cancer,
10 birth defects or other reproductive harm.

11 **II. PARTIES**

12 3. Plaintiff is a non-profit public benefit corporation formed pursuant to the laws of the
13 State of California, made up of California citizens, represented by and through its counsel of record,
14 the Law Office of Daniel N. Greenbaum.

15 4. Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(d) provides that actions to enforce Proposition 65
16 may be brought by “any person in the public interest.”

17 5. Defendant THE FLETCHER-TERRY COMPANY is a business entity with ten or
18 more employees that sells, or has, at times relevant to this complaint, authorized the manufacture,
19 distribution, or sale of plastic cutter products, including, but not limited to, Scoremate Plastic Cutter
20 05-11;UPC081777051112 that contain DEHP, for sale within the State of California, without first
21 giving clear and reasonable warning.

22 6. Defendant HOT HEADZ INTERNATIONAL, INC is a business entity with ten or
23 more employees that sells, or has, at times relevant to this complaint, authorized the manufacture,
24 distribution, or sale of plastic plant ties, including, but not limited to, Frog Plant Ties;
25 UPC878845010597 that contain DEHP, for sale within the State of California, without first giving
26 clear and reasonable warning.

27 7. Defendant ROPE KING USA, LLC is a business entity with ten or more employees
28 that sells, or has, at times relevant to this complaint, authorized the manufacture, distribution, or sale

1 of plastic clothesline products, including, but not limited to, 100-Ft Plastic All Purpose Clothline
2 #PCL; UPC813603010952 that contain DEHP, for sale within the State of California, without first
3 giving clear and reasonable warning.

4 8. The identities of DOES 1 through 100 are unknown to Plaintiff at this time; however,
5 Plaintiff suspects they are business entities with at least ten or more employees that at all times
6 relevant to this complaint, authorized the manufacture, distribution, or sale of sale of plastic cutter
7 products manufactured by or for Defendant, imported by or for Defendant, or distributed or sold by
8 or for Defendant, including, but not limited to, Scoremate Plastic Cutter 05-11; UPC081777051112;
9 and plastic plant ties products manufactured by or for Defendant, imported by or for Defendant, or
10 distributed or sold by or for Defendant, including, but not limited to, Frog Plant Ties,
11 UPC878845010597; and plastic clothesline manufactured by or for Defendant, imported by or for
12 Defendant, or distributed or sold by or for Defendant, including, but not limited to, 100-Ft Plastic
13 All-Purpose Clothesline #PCL-316100; UPC813603010952 that contain DEHP, for sale within the
14 State of California, without first giving clear and reasonable warning.

15 9. Defendants named in paragraphs 5 through 8 have at all times relevant to this
16 complaint, authorized the manufacture, distribution, or sale of plastic cutter products manufactured
17 by or for Defendant, imported by or for Defendant, or distributed or sold by or for Defendant,
18 including, but not limited to, Scoremate Plastic Cutter 05-11; UPC081777051112; and plastic plant
19 ties products manufactured by or for Defendant, imported by or for Defendant, or distributed or sold
20 by or for Defendant, including, but not limited to, Frog Plant Ties, UPC878845010597; and plastic
21 clothesline manufactured by or for Defendant, imported by or for Defendant, or distributed or sold by
22 or for Defendant, including, but not limited to, 100-Ft Plastic All-Purpose Clothesline #PCL-316100;
23 UPC813603010952, that contain DEHP (hereinafter "PRODUCTS"), for sale within the State of
24 California, without first giving clear and reasonable warning.

25 III. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

26 10. This Court has jurisdiction pursuant to California Constitution Article VI, section 10,
27 because this case is a cause not given by statute to other trial courts.

1 11. This Court has jurisdiction over Defendants, because they are business entities that do
2 sufficient business, have sufficient minimum contacts in California, or otherwise intentionally avail
3 themselves of the California market, through the sale, marketing, and use of its products in
4 California, to render the exercise of jurisdiction over it by the California courts consistent with
5 traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.

6 12. Venue is proper in this Court because the cause, or part thereof, arises in Alameda
7 County because Defendant's products are sold and consumed in this county.

8 **IV. STATUTORY BACKGROUND**

9 13. The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 is an initiative statute
10 passed as "Proposition 65" by a vote of the people in November of 1986.

11 14. The warning requirement of Proposition 65 is contained in Health & Safety Code §
12 25249.6, which provides:

13 No person in the course of doing business shall knowingly and intentionally
14 expose any individual to a chemical known to the state to cause cancer or
15 reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable warning to
such individual, except as provided in Section 25249.10.

16 15. An exposure to a chemical in a consumer product is one "which results from a
17 person's acquisition, purchase, storage, consumption, or other reasonably foreseeable use of a
18 consumer good, or any exposure that results from receiving a consumer service." (27 CCR 25602(b))

19 16. Proposition 65 establishes a procedure by which the State develops a list of chemicals
20 "known to the State to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity." (Health & Safety Code § 25249.8.)

21 17. No warning need be given concerning a listed chemical until one year after the
22 chemical first appears on the list. (Health & Safety Code § 25249.10(b).)

23 18. Any person "violating or threatening to violate" the statute may be enjoined in any
24 court of competent jurisdiction. (Health & Safety Code, § 25249.7.)

25 19. To "threaten to violate" is defined to mean "to create a condition in which there is a
26 substantial probability that a violation will occur." (Health & Safety Code § 25249.11(e).)

20. In addition, violators are liable for civil penalties of up to \$2,500 per day for each violation, recoverable in a civil action. (Health & Safety Code § 25249.7 (b).)

21. Actions to enforce the law “may be brought by the Attorney General in the name of the People of the State of California [or] by any district attorney [or] by any City Attorney of a City having a population in excess of 750,000 . . .” (Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(c).)

22. Private parties are given authority to enforce Proposition 65 “in the public interest,” but only if the private party first provides written notice of a violation to the alleged violator, the Attorney General, and every District Attorney in whose jurisdiction the alleged violation occurs.

23. If no public prosecutors commence enforcement within sixty days, then the private party may sue. (Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(d).)

V. FACTS

24. DEHP was placed on the Governor's list of chemicals known to the State to cause cancer on January 1, 1988. (27 CCR 27001(b))

25. DEHP was placed on the Governor's list of chemicals known to the State to cause reproductive toxicity on October 24, 2003. (27 CCR 27001(b))

26. Defendants HOT HEADZ INTERNATIONALINC; THE FLETCHER-TERRY COMPANY; ROPE KING USA, LLC are the manufacturers of the PRODUCTS for use by individuals in the home and other endeavors.

27. The PRODUCTS are sold through various retailers, including but not limited DENAULT'S TRUE VALUE HARDWARE, located in California for use by citizens of the State of California.

28. Beginning on February 17, 2017, Plaintiff's expert prepared a series of report summarizing the results of analysis on the PRODUCTS, including the amount of the DEHP in the PRODUCTS.

29. Based on the levels, Plaintiff's expert opined that use of the PRODUCTS would lead to exposure to DEHP above the safe harbor levels set by the Office of Environment Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA).

1 30. Based on that report and opinion, Plaintiff and its counsel prepared a Notice of
2 Violation.

3 31. Pursuant to the statute and regulations referenced above, on March 02, 2017, Plaintiff
4 served the Notices of Violation on the Office of the Attorney General, Defendant, as well as all
5 required public agencies.

6 32. Plaintiff is unaware of any governmental prosecution against Defendant.

7 33. At least sixty days have elapsed since service of the Notice of Violation.

8 34. Based upon consultation with experts, Plaintiff alleges that individuals who purchase,
9 handle, or use the PRODUCTS are exposed to DEHP chiefly through:

10 a. contact between the item and the skin;

11 b. transfer of DEHP from the skin to the mouth, both by transfer of DEHP
12 directly from the hand to mouth, and indirectly by transfer of DEHP from the skin to objects
13 that are placed in the mouth, such as food; and

14 c. through absorption of DEHP through the skin.

15 35. Such individuals are thereby exposed to the DEHP that is present on or in the
16 PRODUCTS during the intended and reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS.

17 36. At all times material to this complaint, Defendants have had knowledge that the
18 PRODUCTS contain DEHP and that an individual's skin may contact DEHP through the intended
19 and reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS.

20 37. At all times material to this complaint, Defendants have had knowledge that
21 individuals within the State of California handle the PRODUCTS, which contain DEHP.

22 38. At all times material to this complaint, Defendants knew that the PRODUCTS were
23 sold throughout the State of California in large numbers, and Defendants profited from such sales.

24 39. Notwithstanding this knowledge, Defendants intentionally authorized and reauthorized
25 the sale of the PRODUCTS, thereby exposing consumers to DEHP.

26 40. At all times material to this complaint, therefore, Defendants have knowingly and
27 intentionally exposed individuals within the State of California to DEHP.
28

1 41. The exposure is knowing and intentional because it is the result of the Defendant's
2 deliberate act of authorizing the sale of products known to contain DEHP, in a manner whereby these
3 products were, and would inevitably be, sold to consumers within the state of California, and with the
4 knowledge that the intended use of this PRODUCTS would result in exposures to DEHP by
5 individuals within the State of California.

6 42. Defendants have failed to provide clear and reasonable warnings that the use of the
7 PRODUCTS in question in California results in exposure to a chemical known to the State of
8 California to cause cancer, birth defects, and other reproductive harm, and no such warning was
9 provided to those individuals by any other person.

10 **VI. FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

11 **(Against All Defendants for Violation of Proposition 65)**

12 43. Paragraphs 1 through 42 are re-alleged as if fully set forth herein.

13 44. By committing the acts alleged above, Defendants have, in the course of doing
14 business, knowingly and intentionally exposed individuals in California to chemicals known to the
15 State of California to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable
16 warning to such individuals, within the meaning of Health & Safety Code § 25249.6.

17 45. Said violations render Defendants liable to Plaintiffs for civil penalties not to exceed
18 \$2,500 per day for each violation, as well as other remedies.

19 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

20 WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs pray that the Court:

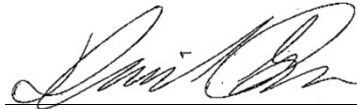
- 21 1. Pursuant to the First Causes of Action, grant civil penalties according to proof;
- 22 2. Pursuant to Health & Safety Code § 25249.7, enter such temporary restraining orders,
23 preliminary injunctions, permanent injunctions, or other orders prohibiting Defendant from
24 exposing persons within the State of California to Listed Chemicals caused by the use of their
25 products without providing clear and reasonable warnings, as Plaintiffs shall specify in further
26 application to the court;
- 27 3. Award Plaintiffs their costs of suit;

1 4. Grant such other and further relief as the court deems just and proper.
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4 Respectfully submitted,
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6 DATED: February 16, 2018
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8 LAW OFFICE OF DANIEL N. GREENBAUM
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12 By: DANIEL N. GREENBAUM
13 Attorneys for Plaintiff
14 Shefa LMV, INC.
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