

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.

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MARGARET J. DOWN

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

SHEFA LMV, INC.,

Plaintiff,

vs.

SEARS HOLDINGS CORPORATION;  
RONAN TOOLS, INC.; ALLSTAR  
PRODUCTS GROUP; WAHL CLIPPER  
CORPORATION; and DOES 1 through 100,  
Inclusive,

Defendants.

) Unlimited Jurisdiction

) CASE NO.

**RG18915687**

) 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 SEARS HOLDINGS CORPORATION 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 handled tool products manufactured by or for Defendant, imported by  
20 or for Defendant, or distributed or sold by or for Defendant, including, but not limited to, Multi-Cut  
21 3-in-1 Cutting Tool, Item #MC011112, UPC: 740275048436 and trimmer products contained in  
22 plastic storage pouches manufactured by or for Defendant, imported by or for Defendant, or  
23 distributed or sold by or for Defendant, including, but not limited to, Pure Confidence™  
24 Rechargeable Trimmer, Model 9865-1000, UPC: 043917986517, that contain DEHP, for sale within  
25 the State of California, without first giving clear and reasonable warning.

26 6. Defendant ALLSTAR PRODUCTS GROUP is a business entity with ten or more  
27 employees that sells, or has, at times relevant to this complaint, authorized the manufacture,  
28 distribution, or sale of plastic handled tool products manufactured by or for Defendant, imported by

1 or for Defendant, or distributed or sold by or for Defendant, including, but not limited to, Multi-Cut  
2 3-in-1 Cutting Tool, Item #MC011112, UPC: 740275048436; that contain DEHP, for sale within the  
3 State of California, without first giving clear and reasonable warning.

4 7. Defendant RONAN TOOLS, INC. is a business entity with ten or more employees  
5 that sells, or has, at times relevant to this complaint, authorized the manufacture, distribution, or sale  
6 of plastic handled tool products manufactured by or for Defendant, imported by or for Defendant, or  
7 distributed or sold by or for Defendant, including, but not limited to, Multi-Cut 3-in-1 Cutting Tool,  
8 Item #MC011112, UPC: 740275048436 that contain DEHP, for sale within the State of California,  
9 without first giving clear and reasonable warning.

10 8. Defendant WAHL CLIPPER CORPORATION is a business entity with ten or more  
11 employees that sells, or has, at times relevant to this complaint, authorized the manufacture,  
12 distribution, or sale of trimmer products in plastic storage pouches manufactured by or for Defendant,  
13 imported by or for Defendant, or distributed or sold by or for Defendant, including, but not limited to,  
14 Pure Confidence™ Rechargeable Trimmer, Model 9865-1000, UPC: 043917986517, that contain  
15 DEHP, for sale within the State of California, without first giving clear and reasonable warning.

16 9. The identities of DOES 1 through 100 are unknown to Plaintiff at this time; however,  
17 Plaintiff suspects they are business entities with at least ten or more employees that at all times  
18 relevant to this complaint, authorized the manufacture, distribution, or sale of is a business entity with  
19 ten or more employees that sells, or has, at times relevant to this complaint, authorized the  
20 manufacture, distribution, or sale of plastic handled tool products manufactured by or for Defendant,  
21 imported by or for Defendant, or distributed or sold by or for Defendant, including, but not limited to,  
22 Multi-Cut 3-in-1 Cutting Tool, Item #MC011112, UPC: 740275048436 and trimmer products in  
23 plastic storage pouches manufactured by or for Defendant, imported by or for Defendant, or  
24 distributed or sold by or for Defendant, including, but not limited to, Pure Confidence™  
25 Rechargeable Trimmer, Model 9865-1000, UPC: 043917986517, that contain DEHP, for sale within  
26 the State of California, without first giving clear and reasonable warning.

10. Defendants named in paragraphs 5 through 9 have at all times relevant to this complaint, authorized the manufacture, distribution, or is a business entity with ten or more employees that sells, or has, at times relevant to this complaint, authorized the manufacture, distribution, or sale of plastic handled tool products manufactured by or for Defendants, imported by or for Defendants, or distributed or sold by or for Defendants, including, but not limited to, Multi-Cut 3-in-1 Cutting Tool, Item #MC011112, UPC: 740275048436 and trimmer products in plastic storage pouches manufactured by or for Defendant, imported by or for Defendants or distributed or sold by or for Defendants, including, but not limited to, Pure Confidence™ Rechargeable Trimmer, Model 9865-1000, UPC: 043917986517, that contain DEHP (hereinafter “PRODUCTS”), for sale within the State of California, without first giving clear and reasonable warning.

### III. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

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

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

13. Venue is proper in this Court because the cause, or part thereof, arises in Alameda County because Defendants' products are sold and consumed in this county.

#### IV. STATUTORY BACKGROUND

14. The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 is an initiative statute passed as “Proposition 65” by a vote of the people in November of 1986.

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

No 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

1 reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable warning to  
2 such individual, except as provided in Section 25249.10.

3 16. An exposure to a chemical in a consumer product is one “which results from a  
4 person’s acquisition, purchase, storage, consumption, or other reasonably foreseeable use of a  
5 consumer good, or any exposure that results from receiving a consumer service.” (27 CCR 25602(b))

6 17. Proposition 65 establishes a procedure by which the State develops a list of chemicals  
7 “known to the State to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity.” (Health & Safety Code § 25249.8.)

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

10 19. Any person “violating or threatening to violate” the statute may be enjoined in any  
11 court of competent jurisdiction. (Health & Safety Code, § 25249.7.)

12 20. To “threaten to violate” is defined to mean “to create a condition in which there is a  
13 substantial probability that a violation will occur.” (Health & Safety Code § 25249.11(e).)

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

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

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

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

## 24 **V. FACTS**

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

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

1           27. Defendants WAHL CLIPPER CORPORATION, RONAN TOOLS, INC. and  
2 ALLSTAR PRODUCTS GROUP are the manufacturers and distributors of the PRODUCTS for use  
3 by individuals in the home and other endeavors.

4           28. The PRODUCTS are sold through various retailers, including but not limited to  
5 Defendant SEARS HOLDINGS CORPORATION, located in California for use by citizens of the  
6 State of California.

7           29. On September 18, 2017, Plaintiff's expert prepared reports summarizing the results of  
8 analysis on the PRODUCTS, including the amount of the DEHP in the products.

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

12           31. Based on that report and opinion, Plaintiff and its counsel prepared a Notice of  
13 Violation.

14           32. Pursuant to the statute and regulations referenced above, on October 4, 2017, Plaintiff  
15 served the Notices of Violation on the Office of the Attorney General, Defendants, as well as all  
16 required public agencies.

17           33. Plaintiff is unaware of any governmental prosecution against Defendants.

18           34. At least sixty days have elapsed since service of the Notice of Violation.

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

21               a. contact between the item and the skin;

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

25               c. through absorption of DEHP through the skin.

26           36. Such individuals are thereby exposed to the DEHP that is present on or in the  
27 PRODUCTS during the intended and reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS.  
28

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## VI. FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

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

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

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

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

## PRAYER FOR RELIEF


WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs pray that the Court:

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

Respectfully submitted,

DATED: August 2, 2018

LAW OFFICE OF DANIEL N. GREENBAUM

By:   
DANIEL N. GREENBAUM  
Attorneys for Plaintiff  
Shefa LMV, INC.