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Superior Court of CA,
County of Santa Clara
18CV323650
Reviewed By: S. Alvarez

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Safe Products for Californians, LLC
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8 **SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA**
9 **COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA**

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11 SAFE PRODUCTS FOR CALIFORNIANS,) No. 18CV323650
LLC,)
12 Plaintiff,) **COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES**
13 vs.) **AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**
14) (Health & Safety Code § 25249.5, *et seq.*)
ORIENTAL TRADING COMPANY, INC.;)
15 FUN EXPRESS, LLC; AND DOES 1)
16 THROUGH 150)
17 Defendants.)
18)
19)
20)

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22 Plaintiff, SAFE PRODUCTS FOR CALIFORNIANS, LLC (“Plaintiff”), alleges as
23 follows:

24 **SUMMARY**

25 1. This is a representative action brought by Plaintiff in the public interest of the
26 citizens of the State of California to enforce the public’s right to be informed of the health
27 hazards caused by exposures to di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (“DEHP”), a toxic chemical found
28 in and on the products manufactured, distributed, and/or sold by Defendants, ORIENTAL

1 TRADING COMPANY, INC.; FUN EXPRESS, LLC; and DOES 1 THROUGH 150, inclusive
2 (collectively “Defendants”), as set forth below.

3 2. By this Complaint, Plaintiff seeks to remedy Defendants’ continuing failure to
4 warn individuals not covered by California’s Occupational Safety Health Act, Labor Code
5 § 6300, *et seq.* (“OSHA”), who purchase, use, or handle Defendants’ products, about the risks
6 of exposure to DEHP present in and on the products manufactured, distributed, and sold
7 throughout the State of California. Individuals not covered by OSHA who purchase, use, or
8 handle Defendants’ products are referred to hereinafter as “Consumers.”

9 3. Detectable levels of DEHP are found in and on the clear vinyl storage bags that
10 Defendants manufacture, distribute, and/or offer for sale to Consumers throughout the State of
11 California.

12 4. Under the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, codified at
13 Health & Safety Code § 25249.5, *et seq.* (“Proposition 65”), “[n]o person in the course of
14 doing business shall knowingly and intentionally expose any individual to a chemical known to
15 the state to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable
16 warning to such individual ...” Health & Safety Code § 25249.6.

17 5. Pursuant to Proposition 65, on October 24, 2003, California identified and listed
18 DEHP as a chemical known to cause birth defects and reproductive harm. DEHP became
19 subject to the “clear and reasonable warning” requirements of Proposition 65 one year later on
20 October 25, 2004. Cal. Code Regs. tit. 27, § 27001(c); Health & Safety Code § 25249.8.

21 6. Defendants manufacture, distribute, import, sell, and offer for sale without
22 health warnings in the State of California, clear vinyl storage bags that contain excessive levels
23 of DEHP including, but not limited to, “Set of 3 Clear Vinyl Storage Bags with Handle
24 (Medium)” Item #367, ASIN #B06Y5DT192, UPC #886102994467, and “Clear Vinyl
25 Backpack Book Bag 3 pc” UPC #889070001441. All such products containing DEHP are
26 referred to collectively hereinafter as “Products.”

27 7. Defendants’ failure to warn Consumers in the State of California of the health
28 hazards associated with exposures to DEHP in conjunction with Defendants’ sales of the

1 Products are violations of Proposition 65, and subject Defendants, and each of them, to
2 enjoinder of such conduct as well as civil penalties for each violation. Health & Safety Code
3 § 25249.7(a) & (b)(1).

4 8. For Defendants' violations of Proposition 65, Plaintiff seeks preliminary and
5 permanent injunctive relief to compel Defendants to provide Consumers of the Products with
6 the required warning regarding the health hazards associated with exposures to DEHP. Health
7 & Safety Code § 25249.7(a).

8 9. Pursuant to Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(b), Plaintiff also seeks civil
9 penalties against Defendants for their violations of Proposition 65.

10 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

11 10. The California Superior Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to
12 California Constitution Article VI, section 10, which grants the Superior Court "original
13 jurisdiction in all cases except those given by statute to other trial courts." The statute under
14 which this action is brought does not specify any other basis of subject matter jurisdiction.

15 11. The California Superior Court has jurisdiction over Defendants based on
16 Plaintiff's information and good faith belief that Defendants are each a person, firm,
17 corporation, or association that is a citizen of the State of California, has sufficient minimum
18 contacts in the State of California, and/or purposefully avails itself of the California market.
19 Defendants' purposeful availment renders the exercise of personal jurisdiction by California
20 courts consistent with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.

21 12. Venue is proper in the Superior Court for the County of Santa Clara, pursuant to
22 Code of Civil Procedure §§ 393, 395, and 395.5, because this Court is a court of competent
23 jurisdiction, because Plaintiff seeks civil penalties against Defendants, because one or more
24 instances of wrongful conduct occurred, and continue to occur, in this county, and/or because
25 Defendants conducted, and continue to conduct, business in Santa Clara County with respect to
26 the Products.

27 **PARTIES**

28 13. Plaintiff is a limited liability California company with its principal place of

1 business within the State of California, County of Santa Clara. Plaintiff seeks to reduce or
2 eliminate the presence of hazardous substances in consumer products sold in California, and to
3 ensure that California consumers are aware of the presence of such substances in consumer
4 goods so that they can make an educated effort to limit their own exposure where deemed
5 necessary. Plaintiff brings this action in the public interest pursuant to Health & Safety Code
6 § 25249.7(d).

7 14. Defendants ORIENTAL TRADING COMPANY, INC. and FUN EXPRESS,
8 LLC; are each persons in the course of doing business within the meaning of Health & Safety
9 Code §§ 25249.6 and 25249.11.

10 15. Defendants manufacture, import, distribute, sell, and/or offer the Products for
11 sale or use in the State of California, or imply by their conduct that they manufacture, import,
12 distribute, sell, and/or offer the Products for sale or use in the State of California.

13 16. Defendants DOES 1 THROUGH 50, inclusive (“Manufacturer Defendants”),
14 are each a person in the course of doing business within the meaning of Health & Safety Code
15 §§ 25249.6 and 25249.11.

16 17. Manufacturer Defendants, and each of them, research, test, design, assemble,
17 fabricate, and manufacture, or each implies by its conduct that it researches, tests, designs,
18 assembles, fabricates, and manufactures, one or more of the Products offered for sale or use in
19 California.

20 18. Defendants DOES 51 THROUGH 100, inclusive (“Distributor Defendants”),
21 are each a person in the course of doing business within the meaning of Health & Safety Code
22 §§ 25249.6 and 25249.11.

23 19. Distributor Defendants, and each of them, distribute, exchange, transfer,
24 process, and transport one or more of the Products to individuals, businesses, or retailers for
25 sale or use in the State of California, or each implies by its conduct that it distributes,
26 exchanges, transfers, processes, and transports one or more of the Products to individuals,
27 businesses, or retailers for sale or use in the State of California.

28 20. Defendants DOES 101 THROUGH 150, inclusive (“Retailer Defendants”), are

1 each a person in the course of doing business within the meaning of Health & Safety Code
2 §§ 25249.6 and 25249.11.

3 21. Retailer Defendants, and each of them, offer the Products for sale to individuals
4 in the State of California.

5 22. At this time, the true names of Defendants DOES 1 THROUGH 150, inclusive,
6 are unknown to Plaintiff, who, therefore, sues said defendants by their fictitious names
7 pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure § 474. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and on that basis
8 alleges, that each of the fictitiously named defendants is responsible for the acts and
9 occurrences alleged herein. When ascertained, their true names shall be reflected in an
10 amended complaint.

11 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

12 **Violation of Proposition 65**

13 23. Plaintiff re-pleads and incorporates by reference the allegations contained in
14 each of the foregoing paragraphs, and incorporates them herein as if separately re-pled.

15 24. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that each of the
16 Defendants employs ten or more persons.

17 25. In enacting Proposition 65, in the preamble to the Safe Drinking Water and
18 Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, the People of California expressly declared their right “[t]o be
19 informed about exposures to chemicals that cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive
20 harm.”

21 26. Proposition 65 states, “[no] person in the course of doing business shall
22 knowingly and intentionally expose any individual to a chemical known to the state to cause
23 cancer or reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable warning to such
24 individual ...” Health & Safety Code § 25249.6.

25 27. On December 11, 2017, Plaintiff served a sixty-day notice of violation,
26 including the attachment of a Certificate of Merit affirming that Plaintiff’s counsel had
27 consulted with at least one person with relevant and appropriate expertise who reviewed
28 relevant data regarding the alleged exposures to DEHP and that counsel believed there was

1 meritorious and reasonable cause for a public action, on Defendants ORIENTAL TRADING
2 COMPANY, INC. and FUN EXPRESS, LLC, the California Attorney General's Office, and
3 the requisite public enforcement agencies, alleging that, as a result of Defendants' sales of the
4 Products, Consumers in the State of California are being exposed to DEHP resulting from their
5 reasonably foreseeable use of the Products, without the Consumers first receiving a "clear and
6 reasonable warning" regarding the harms associated with exposures to DEHP, as required by
7 Proposition 65.

8 28. Defendants manufacture, import, distribute, sell, and offer the Products for sale
9 or use in violation of Health & Safety Code § 25249.6, and Defendants' violations have
10 continued beyond their receipt of Plaintiff's sixty-day notice of violation. As such, Defendants'
11 violations are ongoing and continuous in nature and, unless enjoined, will continue in the
12 future.

13 29. After receiving Plaintiff's sixty-day notice of violation, and to Plaintiff's best
14 information and belief, no public enforcement agency has commenced and diligently
15 prosecuted a cause of action against Defendants under Proposition 65 to enforce the alleged
16 violations that are the subject of Plaintiff's notice of violation.

17 30. The Products that Defendants manufacture, import, distribute, sell, and offer for
18 sale or use in California cause exposures to DEHP as a result of the reasonably foreseeable use
19 of the Products. Such exposures caused by Defendants and endured by Consumers in
20 California are not exempt from the "clear and reasonable" warning requirements of Proposition
21 65, yet Defendants provide no clear and reasonable warning.

22 31. Defendants knew or should have known that the Products they manufacture,
23 import, distribute, sell, and offer for sale or use in California contain DEHP.

24 32. DEHP are present in or on the Products in such a way as to expose Consumers
25 through dermal contact, inhalation, and/or ingestion during reasonably foreseeable use.

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

1 34. Defendants know that the normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the
2 Products exposes individuals to DEHP through dermal contact, inhalation, and/or ingestion.

3 35. Defendants intend that exposures to DEHP through the reasonably foreseeable
4 use of the Products will occur by their deliberate, non-accidental participation in the
5 manufacture, importation, distribution, sale, and offering of the Products for sale or use to
6 Consumers in California.

7 36. Defendants failed to provide a "clear and reasonable warning" to those
8 Consumers in California who have been, or will be, exposed to DEHP through dermal contact,
9 inhalation, and/or ingestion resulting from their use of the Products.

10 37. Contrary to the express policy and statutory prohibition of Proposition 65
11 enacted directly by California voters, consumers exposed to DEHP through dermal contact,
12 inhalation, and/or ingestion as a result of their use of the Products that Defendants sold without
13 a "clear and reasonable" health hazard warning have suffered, and continue to suffer,
14 irreparable harm for which they have no plain, speedy, or adequate remedy at law.

15 38. Pursuant to Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(b), as a consequence of the above-
16 described acts, Defendants, and each of them, are liable for a maximum civil penalty of \$2,500
17 per day for each violation.

18 39. As a consequence of the above-described acts, Health & Safety Code
19 § 25249.7(a) also specifically authorizes the Court to grant injunctive relief against
20 Defendants.

21 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

22 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays judgment against Defendants, and each of them, for:

- 23 1. Civil penalties in the amount of \$2,500 per day for each violation, pursuant to
24 Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(b);
- 25 2. Preliminary and permanent injunctions mandating that Defendants recall all
26 Products currently in the chain of commerce in California without a "clear and
27 reasonable warning" as defined by California Code of Regulations title 27,
28 section 25601, *et seq.*;

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3. That the Court, pursuant to Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(a), preliminarily and permanently enjoin Defendants from manufacturing, distributing, or offering the Products for sale or use in California without first providing a “clear and reasonable warning” in accordance with title 27 of the California Code of Regulations, section 25601, *et seq.*, regarding the harms associated with DEHP;
4. Plaintiff’s reasonable attorney’s fees and costs of suit; and
5. For such other and further relief as the Court deems proper.

Dated: 2-16-18

MISSION LAW FIRM, A.P.C.

Tanya Moore
Tanya K. Moore
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Safe Products for Californians, LLC