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ENDORSED
FILED
ALAMEDA COUNTY
MAY 24 2018

CLERK OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
By Lanette Buffin, Deputy

9
10 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
11 COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

12 HECTOR VELARDE,

13 Plaintiff,

14 vs.

15 RECOVER INC.,

16 Defendant.

Case No. *R* 18906216

COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES
AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

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

17
18 Plaintiff Hector Velarde ("Plaintiff"), by and through his attorneys, alleges the following
19 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 to Di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP), a toxic chemical found in
2 Dress Your Tech Vinyl Laptop Skins sold and/or distributed by defendant Recover, Inc..
3 (“Recover” or “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 it 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 developmental reproductive toxicity.

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, sells and/or offers for
21 sale in California, without the requisite exposure warning, Dress Your Tech Vinyl Laptop Skins
22 (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 and/or distribution
25 of the Products is a violation of Proposition 65 and subjects Defendant to the enjoinder and
26 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 in the State of California, and/or has otherwise purposefully availed itself of the California
2 market. 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 March 12, 2018, Plaintiff gave notice of alleged violation of Health and Safety
6 Code § 25249.6 (the "Notice") to Defendant concerning the exposure of California citizens to
7 DEHP contained in the Products without proper warning, subject to a private action to Defendant
8 and to the California Attorney General's office and the offices of the County District attorneys
9 and City Attorneys for each city with a population greater than 750,000 persons wherein the
10 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 his
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 has, 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 Product does 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 September 27, 2017, 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 absorption. The product can be expected to emit
11 gas phase DEHP into the air over and accumulate DEHP at the surface over the lifetime of the
12 product. Users may potentially be exposed to DEHP by dermal absorption through direct skin
13 contact with the vinyl laptop skin during routine use when the laptop is manipulated with bare
14 hands. Should the user handle the laptop with wet hands, aqueous DEHP skin permeation rates
15 are faster than neat DEHP permeation. If the laptop is stored or transported in a carrier, DEHP
16 that leaches from the vinyl laptop skin may contaminate other articles contained within these
17 closed spaces that are subsequently handled, worn, mouthed, or ingested by the user. Finally,
18 while mouthing of the product does not seem likely, some amount of exposure through ingestion
19 can occur by touching the product with subsequent touching of the user's hand to mouth.

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

23 27. Defendant has knowledge that the normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the
24 Product exposes individuals to DEHP, and Defendant intends that exposures to DEHP will occur
25 by its deliberate, non-accidental participation in the manufacture, importation, distribution, sale
26 and offering of the Products to consumers in California

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

