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ENDORSED
FILED
ALAMEDA COUNTY

MAY 08 2019

CLERK OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
By _____ Deputy

Jayana Turner

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

10 ANTHONY FERREIRO,
11 Plaintiff,
12 vs.
13 SUR LA TABLE, INC.,
14 Defendant.

Case No.: *RC19018094*
**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES AND
INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**
(Violation of Health & Safety Code § 25249.5 et
seq.)

15 Plaintiff Anthony Ferreiro ("Plaintiff"), by and through his attorneys, alleges the
16 following cause of action in the public interest of the citizens of the State of California.

17 **BACKGROUND OF THE CASE**

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

24 2. This complaint is a representative action brought by Plaintiff in the public interest
25 of the citizens of the State of California to enforce the People's right to be informed of the health
26 hazards caused by exposure to LEAD, a toxic chemical found in ceramic plate sets sold and/or
27 distributed by defendant Sur La Table, Inc. ("Sur La Table" or "Defendant") in California.

1 3. LEAD is a harmful chemical known to the State of California to cause cancer and
2 reproductive toxicity. On February 27, 1987, the State of California listed LEAD as a chemical
3 known to the State to cause reproductive toxicity and it has come under the purview of
4 Proposition 65 regulations since that time. Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 27, § 27001(c); Health & Safety
5 Code §§ 25249.8 & 25249.10(b). On October 1, 1992, the State of California listed LEAD as a
6 chemical known to cause cancer.

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

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

17 6. Plaintiff alleges that Defendant manufactures, distributes and/or offers for sale in
18 California, without a requisite exposure warning, ceramic plate sets (the “Products”) that expose
19 persons to LEAD.

20 7. Defendant’s failure to warn consumers and other individuals in California of the
21 health hazards associated with exposure to LEAD in conjunction with the sale and/or distribution
22 of the Products is a violation of Proposition 65 and subjects Defendant to the enjoinder and
23 civil penalties described herein.

24 8. Plaintiff seeks civil penalties against Defendant for its violations of Proposition
25 65 in accordance with Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(b).

26 9. Plaintiff also seeks injunctive relief, preliminarily and permanently, requiring
27 Defendant to provide purchasers or users of the Products with required warnings related to the
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1 dangers and health hazards associated with exposure to LEAD pursuant to Health and Safety
2 Code § 25249.7(a).

3 **PARTIES**

4 10. Plaintiff is a citizen of the State of California acting in the interest of the general
5 public to promote awareness of exposures to toxic chemicals in products sold in California and
6 to improve human health by reducing hazardous substances contained in such items. He brings
7 this action in the public interest pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(d).

8 11. Defendant Sur La Table, through its business, effectively manufactures, imports,
9 distributes, sells, and/or offers the Products for sale or use in the State of California, or it implies
10 by its conduct that it manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the Products for sale
11 or use in the State of California.

12 12. Plaintiff alleges that defendant Sur La Table is a “person” in the course of doing
13 business within the meaning of Health & Safety Code sections 25249.6 and 25249.11.

14 **VENUE AND JURISDICTION**

15 13. Venue is proper in the County of Alameda because one or more of the instances
16 of wrongful conduct occurred, and continue to occur in this county and/or because Defendant
17 conducted, and continues to conduct, business in the County of Alameda with respect to the
18 Products.

19 14. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to California Constitution
20 Article VI, § 10, which grants the Superior Court original jurisdiction in all causes except those
21 given by statute to other trial courts. Health and Safety Code § 25249.7 allows for the
22 enforcement of violations of Proposition 65 in any Court of competent jurisdiction; therefore,
23 this Court has jurisdiction over this lawsuit.

24 15. This Court has jurisdiction over Defendant because Defendant is either a citizen
25 of the State of California, has sufficient minimum contacts with the State of California, is
26 registered with the California Secretary of State as foreign corporations authorized to do business
27 in the State of California, and/or has otherwise purposefully availed itself of the California
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1 market. Such purposeful availment has rendered the exercise of jurisdiction by California courts
2 consistent and permissible with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.

3 **SATISFACTION OF NOTICE REQUIREMENTS**

4 16. On August 29, 2018, and on January 9, 2019, Plaintiff gave notice of alleged
5 violation of Health and Safety Code § 25249.6 (collectively, the “Notices”) to Defendant
6 concerning the exposure of California citizens to LEAD contained in the Products without proper
7 warning, subject to a private action to Defendant and to the California Attorney General’s office
8 and the offices of the County District attorneys and City Attorneys for each city with a
9 population greater than 750,000 persons wherein the herein violations allegedly occurred.

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

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

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

21 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

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

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

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

27 22. The Products contain LEAD, a hazardous chemical found on the Proposition 65
28 list of chemicals known to be hazardous to human health.

1 23. The Product does not comply with the Proposition 65 warning requirements.

2 24. Plaintiff, based on his best information and belief, avers that at all relevant times
3 herein, and at least since July 7, 2018, continuing until the present, that Defendant has continued
4 to knowingly and intentionally expose California users and consumers of the Product to LEAD
5 without providing required warnings under Proposition 65.

6 25. The exposures that are the subject of the Notice result from the purchase,
7 acquisition, handling and recommended use of the Products. Consequently, the primary route of
8 exposure to LEAD is through ingestion and/or dermal contact, particularly when consumers,
9 including children, place the Products that have come into contact with food or beverages into
10 their mouths; ingestion via hand to mouth contact after consumers touch or handle the Products;
11 and dermal absorption directly through the skin when consumers touch the Products. People
12 likely to be exposed include children. Increased duration of contact, microwaving, increased
13 acidity, and increased food temperatures in contact with the glazed food contact surface will
14 result in increased levels of LEAD transferred into the food. When foods contaminated with
15 LEAD due to contact with the Products is consumed, LEAD ingestion will occur which will
16 increase BLLs.

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

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

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

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

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