

**FILED BY FAX**

ALAMEDA COUNTY

July 16, 2021

CLERK OF  
THE SUPERIOR COURT  
By Nicole Hall, Deputy

CASE NUMBER:

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Attorneys for Plaintiff

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATES, INC.

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA****IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF ALAMEDA**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATES,  
INC.,

Plaintiff,

v.

WILLIAMS FOODS LLC, a Delaware limited  
liability company, and DOES 1 through 100,  
inclusive,

Defendant.

Case No.:

**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES  
AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

(Health &amp; Safety Code § 25249.6 et seq.)

**I.**  
**INTRODUCTION**

1. This Complaint is a representative action brought by Environmental Health Advocates, Inc. ("Plaintiff") in the public interest of the citizens of the State of California ("the People"). Plaintiff seeks to remedy Defendant's failure to inform the People of exposure to Lead, a known carcinogen. Defendant exposes consumers to Lead by manufacturing, importing, selling, and/or distributing Best Yet Original Chili Seasoning ("Products"). Defendant knows and intend that customers will ingest Products containing Lead.

2. Under California's Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, California Health and Safety Code, section 25249.6 et seq. ("Proposition 65"), "[n]o 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 reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable warning to such individual. . . ." (Health & Safety Code, § 25249.6.)

3. California identified and listed Lead as a chemical known to cause cancer as early as October 1, 1992, and as a chemical known to cause developmental/reproductive toxicity on February 27, 1987.

4. Defendant failed to sufficiently warn consumers and individuals in California about potential exposure to Lead in connection with Defendant's manufacture, import, sale, or distribution of Products. This is a violation of Proposition 65.

5. Plaintiff seeks injunctive relief compelling Defendant to sufficiently warn consumers in California before exposing them to Lead in Products. (Health & Safety Code, § 25249.7(a).) Plaintiff also seeks civil penalties against Defendant for their violations of Proposition 65 along with attorney's fees and costs. (Health & Safety Code, § 25249.7(b).)

**II.**  
**PARTIES**

6. Plaintiff ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATES, INC. ("Plaintiff") is a corporation in the State of California dedicated to protecting the health of California citizens through the elimination or reduction of toxic exposure from consumer products. It brings this action in the public interest pursuant to Health and Safety Code, section 25249.7.

7. Defendant WILLIAMS FOODS LLC ("Williams") is a limited liability company organized and existing under the laws of Delaware. Williams is registered to do business in California, and does business in the County of Alameda, within the meaning of Health and Safety Code, section 25249.11. Williams manufactures, imports, sells, or distributes the Products in California and Alameda County.

8. Plaintiff does not know the true names and/or capacities, whether individual, partners, or corporate, of the Defendant sued herein as DOES 1 through 100, inclusive, and for that reason sues said Defendant under fictitious names. Plaintiff will seek leave to amend this Complaint when the true names and capacities of these Defendant have been ascertained. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that these Defendant are responsible in whole or in part for Plaintiff's alleged damages.

### **III.**

#### **VENUE AND JURISDICTION**

9. California Constitution Article VI, Section 10 grants the Superior Court original jurisdiction in all cases except those given by statute to other trial courts. The Health and Safety Code statute upon which this action is based does not give jurisdiction to any other court. As such, this Court has jurisdiction.

10. Venue is proper in Alameda County Superior Court pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure, sections 394, 395, and 395.5. Wrongful conduct occurred and continues to occur in this County. Defendant conducted and continue to conduct business in this County as it relates to Products.

11. Defendant has sufficient minimum contacts in the State of California or otherwise purposefully avails itself of the California market. Exercising jurisdiction over Defendant would be consistent with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.

### **IV.**

#### **CAUSES OF ACTION**

##### **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

##### **(Violation of Proposition 65 – Against all Defendants)**

12. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each and every allegation contained above.

13. Proposition 65 mandates that citizens be informed about exposures to chemicals that cause cancer, birth defects, and other reproductive harm.

1           14. Defendant manufactured, imported, sold, and/or distributed Products containing Lead  
2 in violation of Health and Safety Code, section 25249.6 et seq. Plaintiff is informed and believes such  
3 violations have continued after receipt of the Notice (defined *infra*) and will continue to occur into the  
4 future.

5           15. In manufacturing, importing, selling, and/or distributing Products, Defendant failed to  
6 provide a clear and reasonable warning to consumers and individuals in California who may be exposed  
7 to Lead through reasonably foreseeable use of the Products.

8           16. Products expose individuals to Lead through direct ingestion. This exposure is a natural  
9 and foreseeable consequence of Defendant placing Products into the stream of commerce. As such,  
10 Defendant intend that consumers will ingest Products, exposing them to Lead.

11           17. Defendant knew or should have known that the Products contained Lead and exposed  
12 individuals to Lead in the ways provided above. The Notice informed Defendant of the presence of  
13 Lead in the Products. Likewise, media coverage concerning Lead and related chemicals in consumer  
14 products provided constructive notice to Defendant.

15           18. Defendant's action in this regard were deliberate and not accidental.

16           19. More than sixty days prior to naming each defendant in this lawsuit, Plaintiff issued a  
17 60-Day Notice of Violation ("Notice") as required by and in compliance with Proposition 65. Plaintiff  
18 provided the Notice to the various required public enforcement agencies along with a certificate of merit.  
19 The Notice alleged that Defendant violated Proposition 65 by failing to sufficiently warn consumers in  
20 California of the health hazards associated with exposures to Lead contained in the Products.

21           20. The appropriate public enforcement agencies provided with the Notice failed to  
22 commence and diligently prosecute a cause of action against Defendant.

23           21. Individuals exposed to Lead contained in Products through direct ingestion resulting  
24 from reasonably foreseeable use of the Products have suffered and continue to suffer irreparable harm.  
25 There is no other plain, speedy, or adequate remedy at law.

26           22. Defendant is liable for a maximum civil penalty of \$2,500 per day for each violation of  
27 Proposition 65 pursuant to Health and Safety Code, section 252497(b). Injunctive relief is also  
28 appropriate pursuant to Health and Safety Code, section 25249.7(a).

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3 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

4 Wherefore, Plaintiff prays for judgment against Defendant as follows:

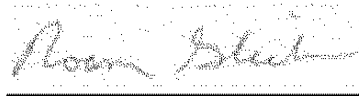
- 5 1. Civil penalties in the amount of \$2,500 per day for each violation. Plaintiff alleges that  
6 damages total a minimum of \$1,000,000.00;
- 7 2. A preliminary and permanent injunction against Defendant from manufacturing,  
8 importing, selling, and/or distributing Products in California without providing a clear and reasonable  
9 warning as required by Proposition 65 and related Regulations;
- 10 3. Reasonable attorney's fees and costs of suit; and
- 11 4. Such other and further relief as may be just and proper.

12 Respectfully submitted:

13 Dated: July 16, 2021

**GLICK LAW GROUP, PC**

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15  
16 By:



Noam Glick

**NICHOLAS & TOMASEVIC, LLP**

19 Craig M. Nicholas  
20 Jake W. Schulte

21 Attorneys for Plaintiff  
22 Environmental Health Advocates, Inc.  
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