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**GLICK LAW GROUP, PC**  
Noam Glick (SBN 251582)  
225 Broadway, Suite 1900  
San Diego, California 92101  
Tel: (619) 382-3400  
Fax: (619) 393-0154  
Email: noam@gllicklawgroup.com

**NICHOLAS & TOMASEVIC, LLP**  
Craig M. Nicholas (SBN 178444)  
Jake W. Schulte (SBN 293777)  
225 Broadway, Suite 1900  
San Diego, California 92101  
Tel: (619) 325-0492  
Email: cnicholas@nicholaslaw.org  
Email: jschulte@nicholaslaw.org

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.

BASE CULTURE, INC., a Florida corporation,  
, and DOES 1 through 100, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: RG21092656

**FIRST AMENDED COMPLAINT FOR  
CIVIL PENALTIES AND INJUNCTIVE  
RELIEF**

(Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 et seq.)

**FILED BY FAX**

ALAMEDA COUNTY

June 16, 2021

CLERK OF  
THE SUPERIOR COURT  
By Shabra Iyamu, Deputy

CASE NUMBER:

**RG21092656**

**I.**  
**INTRODUCTION**

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2           1.       This Complaint is a representative action brought by Environmental Health Advocates,  
3 Inc. (“Plaintiff”) in the public interest of the citizens of the State of California (“the People”). Plaintiff  
4 seeks to remedy Defendants’ failure to inform the People of exposure to acrylamide, a known  
5 carcinogen. Defendants expose consumers to acrylamide by manufacturing, importing, selling, and/or  
6 distributing Base Culture keto bread products including, but not limited to, “Original Keto Bread,”  
7 “Soft Sandwich Bread,” “7 Nut & Seed Bread,” “Cinnamon Raisin Bread,” and “Cheese Bread,”  
8 manufactured or processed by Base Culture that allegedly contain acrylamide and are imported, sold,  
9 shipped, delivered or distributed for sale to consumers in California (“Products”). Defendants know and  
10 intend that customers will ingest Products containing acrylamide.

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

16           3.       California identified and listed acrylamide as a chemical known to cause cancer as early  
17 as January 1, 1990, and as a chemical known to cause developmental/reproductive toxicity on February  
18 25, 2011.

19           4.       Defendants failed to sufficiently warn consumers and individuals in California about  
20 potential exposure to acrylamide in connection with Defendants’ manufacture, import, sale, or  
21 distribution of Products. This is a violation of Proposition 65.

22           5.       Plaintiff seeks injunctive relief compelling Defendants to sufficiently warn consumers  
23 in California before exposing them to acrylamide in Products. (Health & Safety Code, § 25249.7(a).)  
24 Plaintiff also seeks civil penalties against Defendants for its violations of Proposition 65 along with  
25 attorney’s fees and costs. (Health & Safety Code, § 25249.7(b).)

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**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 BASE CULTURE, INC. (“Base Culture”) is a corporation organized and existing under the laws of Florida. Base Culture 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. Base Culture manufactures, imports, sells, or distributes the Products in California and Alameda County.

8. Defendant SPROUTS FARMERS MARKET, INC. (“Sprouts”) is a corporation organized and existing under the laws of Delaware. Sprouts 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. Sprouts manufactures, imports, sells, or distributes the Products in California and Alameda County.

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

**III.**  
**VENUE AND JURISDICTION**

10. 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.

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

4 12. Defendants have sufficient minimum contacts in the State of California or otherwise  
5 purposefully avails itself of the California market. Exercising jurisdiction over Defendants would be  
6 consistent with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.

7 **IV.**  
8 **CAUSES OF ACTION**

9 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**  
10 **(Violation of Proposition 65 – Against all Defendants)**

11 13. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each and every allegation contained above.

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

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

18 16. In manufacturing, importing, selling, and/or distributing Products, Defendants failed to  
19 provide a clear and reasonable warning to consumers and individuals in California who may be exposed  
20 to acrylamide through reasonably foreseeable use of the Products.

21 17. Products expose individuals to acrylamide through direct ingestion. This exposure is a  
22 natural and foreseeable consequence of Defendants placing Products into the stream of commerce. As  
23 such, Defendants intend that consumers will ingest Products, exposing them to acrylamide.

24 18. Defendants knew or should have known that the Products contained acrylamide and  
25 exposed individuals to acrylamide in the ways provided above. The Notice informed Defendants of the  
26 presence of acrylamide in the Products. Likewise, media coverage concerning acrylamide and related  
27 chemicals in consumer products provided constructive notice to Defendants.

28 19. Defendants' action in this regard were deliberate and not accidental.

1           20.       More than sixty days prior to naming each defendant in this lawsuit, Plaintiff issued a  
2 60-Day Notice of Violation (“Notice”) as required by and in compliance with Proposition 65. Plaintiff  
3 provided the Notice to the various required public enforcement agencies along with a certificate of merit.  
4 The Notice alleged that Defendants violated Proposition 65 by failing to sufficiently warn consumers in  
5 California of the health hazards associated with exposures to acrylamide contained in the Products.

6           21.       The appropriate public enforcement agencies provided with the Notice failed to  
7 commence and diligently prosecute a cause of action against Defendants.

8           22.       Individuals exposed to acrylamide contained in Products through direct ingestion  
9 resulting from reasonably foreseeable use of the Products have suffered and continue to suffer  
10 irreparable harm. There is no other plain, speedy, or adequate remedy at law.

11           23.       Defendants are liable for a maximum civil penalty of \$2,500 per day for each violation  
12 of Proposition 65 pursuant to Health and Safety Code, section 252497(b). Injunctive relief is also  
13 appropriate pursuant to Health and Safety Code, section 25249.7(a).

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2 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

3 Wherefore, Plaintiff prays for judgment against Defendants as follows:

4 1. Civil penalties in the amount of \$2,500 per day for each violation. Plaintiff alleges that  
5 damages total a minimum of \$1,000,000;

6 2. A preliminary and permanent injunction against Defendants from manufacturing,  
7 importing, selling, and/or distributing Products in California without providing a clear and reasonable  
8 warning as required by Proposition 65 and related Regulations;

9 3. Reasonable attorney's fees and costs of suit; and

10 4. Such other and further relief as may be just and proper.  
11

12 Respectfully submitted:

13 Dated: January 20, 2021

**NICHOLAS & TOMASEVIC LLP**



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15 By:

16 \_\_\_\_\_  
17 Craig M. Nicholas  
18 Jake W. Schulte

**GLICK LAW GROUP, PC**

19 Noam Glick

20 Attorneys for Plaintiff  
21 Environmental Health Advocates, Inc.  
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