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4	Telephone: (877) 534-2590 Facsimile: (310) 247-0160	FILED Superior Court of California, County of San Francisco	
5	Attorneys for Plaintiff	04/20/2022 Clerk of the Court	
6		BY: KAREN VALDES Deputy Clerk	
7	SUPERIOR COURT OF T	THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA	
8	COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO		
9		Case No.:	
10	PRECILA BALABBO,	COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES AND	
11	Plaintiff,	INJUNCTIVE RELIEF	
12	vs.	(Violation of Health & Safety Code § 25249.5 et seq.)	
13	CRICUT, INC., JO-ANN STORES, LLC	CGC-22-599260	
14	Defendants.		
15 16	Plaintiff Precila Balabbo ("Plaintiff"), by and through her attorneys, alleges the following		
17	cause of action in the public interest of the citizens of the State of California.		
18	BACKGROUND OF THE CASE		
19	1. Plaintiff brings this representa	ative action on behalf of all California citizens to	
20	enforce relevant portions of Safe Drinking Wa	ater and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, codified at	
21	the Health and Safety Code § 25249.5 et seq ("Proposition 65"), which reads, in relevant part,		
22	"[n]o person in the course of doing busine	ess shall knowingly and intentionally expose any	
23	individual to a chemical known to the state to	cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without first	
24	giving clear and reasonable warning to such ir	ndividual". Health & Safety Code § 25249.6.	
25	2. This complaint is a representat	ive action brought by Plaintiff in the public interest	
26	of the citizens of the State of California to enf	force the People's right to be informed of the health	
27	hazards caused by exposure to bisphenol A (BI	PA) from the use of Cricut Machine Tool Organizers	
28	that are manufactured, distributed, offered for	sale and/or sold by defendant Cricut, Inc., ("Cricut")	
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and/or defendant Jo-Ann Stores, LLC ("Jo-Ann Stores") (collectively, the "Defendants") in
 California.

3 3. BPA is a harmful chemical known to the State of California to cause female
reproductive toxicity. On May 11, 2015, the State of California listed BPA as a chemical known
to the State to cause reproductive toxicity and BPA has come under the purview of Proposition 65
regulations since that time. Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 27, § 27001(c); Health & Safety Code §§ 25249.8
& 25249.10(b).

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

5. Proposition 65 allows for civil penalties of up to \$2,500.00 per day per violation
for up to 365 days (up to a maximum civil penalty amount per violation of \$912,000.00) to be
imposed upon defendants in a civil action for violations of Proposition 65. Health & Safety Code
\$ 25249.7(b). Proposition 65 also allows for any court of competent jurisdiction to enjoin the
actions of a defendant which "violate or threaten to violate" the statute. Health & Safety Code \$
25249.7.

19 6. Plaintiff alleges that Defendants distribute and/or offer for sale in California,
20 without a requisite Proposition 65 exposure warning, Cricut Machine Tool Organizers, (the
21 "Products") that expose persons to BPA when used as intended and/or for its intended purpose.

7. Defendants' failure to warn consumers and other individuals in California of the
health hazards associated with exposure to BPA from use of the Products in conjunction with the
sale and/or distribution of the Products is a violation of Proposition 65 and subjects Defendants to
the enjoinment and civil penalties described herein.

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

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9. Plaintiff also seeks injunctive relief, preliminarily and permanently, requiring
 Defendants to provide purchasers or users of the Products with required warnings related to the
 dangers and health hazards associated with exposure to BPA from use of the Products pursuant to
 Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(a).

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Plaintiff further seeks a reasonable award of attorney's fees and costs.

#### PARTIES

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

11 12. Defendant Cricut, through its business, effectively imports, distributes, sells and/or
offers the Products for sale or use in the State of California, or it implies by its conduct that it
imports, distributes, sells and/or offers the Products for sale or use in the State of California.
Plaintiff alleges that defendant Cricut is a "person" in the course of doing business within the
meaning of Health & Safety Code sections 25249.6 and 25249.11.

16 13. Defendant Jo-Ann Stores, through its business, effectively imports, distributes,
17 sells and/or offers the Products for sale or use in the State of California, or it implies by its conduct
18 that it imports, distributes, sells and/or offers the Products for sale or use in the State of California.
19 Plaintiff alleges that defendant Jo-Ann Stores is a "person" in the course of doing business within
20 the meaning of Health & Safety Code sections 25249.6 and 25249.11.

#### **VENUE AND JURISDICTION**

14. Venue is proper in the County of San Francisco because one or more of the
instances of wrongful conduct occurred and continues to occur in this county and/or because
Defendants conducted, and continue to conduct, business in the County of San Francisco with
respect to the Products.

26 15. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to California Constitution
27 Article VI, § 10, which grants the Superior Court original jurisdiction in all causes except those
28 given by statute to other trial courts. Health and Safety Code § 25249.7 allows for the enforcement

COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF – VIOLATION OF HEALTH & SAFETY CODE §25249.5 of violations of Proposition 65 in any Court of competent jurisdiction; therefore, this Court has
 jurisdiction over this lawsuit.

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

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#### **STATUTORY BACKGROUND**

10 17. The people of the State of California declared in Proposition 65 their right "[t]o be
11 informed about exposures to chemicals that cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive
12 harm." (Section 1(b) of Initiative Measure, Proposition 65.)

13 18. To effect this goal, Proposition 65 requires that individuals be provided with a
14 "clear and reasonable warning" before being exposed to substances listed by the State of California
15 as causing cancer or reproductive toxicity. H&S Code § 25249.6 states, in pertinent part:

No 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...

19. An exposure to a chemical in a consumer product is one "which results from a person's acquisition, purchase, storage, consumption or other reasonably foreseeable use of a consumer good, or any exposure that results from receiving a consumer service." (27 CCR § 25602, para (b).) H&S Code § 25603(c) states that "a person in the course of doing business ... shall provide a warning to any person to whom the product is sold or transferred unless the product is packaged or labeled with a clear and reasonable warning."

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20. Pursuant to H&S Code § 25603.1, the warning may be provided by using one or more of the following methods individually or in combination:<sup>1</sup>

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a. A warning that appears on a product's label or other labeling.

b. Identification of the product at the retail outlet in a manner which provides a warning. Identification may be through shelf labeling, signs, menus, or a combination thereof.

c. The warnings provided pursuant to subparagraphs (a) and (b) shall be prominently placed upon a product's labels or other labeling or displayed at the retail outlet with such conspicuousness, as compared with other words, statements, designs, or devices in the label, labeling or display as to render it likely to be read and understood by an ordinary individual under customary conditions of purchase or use.

d. A system of signs, public advertising identifying the system and toll-free information services, or any other system that provides clear and reasonable warnings.

Proposition 65 provides that any "person who violates or threatens to violate" the
statute may be enjoined in a court of competent jurisdiction. (H&S Code § 25249.7.) The phrase
"threaten to violate" is defined as creating "a condition in which there is a substantial probability
that a violation will occur." (H&S Code § 25249.11(e).) Violators are liable for civil penalties of
up to \$2,500.00 per day for each violation of the Act (H&S Code § 25249.7) for up to 365 days
(up to a maximum civil penalty amount per violation of \$912,000.00).

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# FACTUAL BACKGROUND

21 22. On May 11, 2015, the State of California listed BPA as a chemical known to the
22 State to cause female reproductive toxicity and BPA has come under the purview of Proposition
23 65 regulations since that time. Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 27, § 27001(c); Health & Safety Code §§
24 25249.8 & 25249.10(b).

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 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Alternatively, a person in the course of doing business may elect to comply with the warning requirements set out in the amended version of 27 CCR 25601, *et.seq.*. as amended on August 30, 2016, and operative on August 30, 2018.

1 23. The exposures that are the subject of this complaint result from the purchase, 2 acquisition, handling and recommend use of the Products. The primary route of exposure to BPA 3 from use of the Products is dermal exposure. Dermal exposure to BPA is possible when the user 4 handles the Products, or the Products are placed in contact with exposed areas of the user's skin. 5 Additionally, exposure through ingestion will occur by touching the Products with subsequent 6 touching of the user's hand to mouth.

7 24. Defendants have distributed, offered to sell and/or sold the Products in California
8 since at least January 27, 2022. The Products continue to be distributed and sold in California
9 without a requisite Proposition 65 compliant BPA exposure warning.

10 25. At all times relevant to this action, Defendants have knowingly and intentionally
11 exposed users, consumers and/or purchasers of the Products to BPA without first providing a clear
12 and reasonable exposure warning to such individuals.

26. As a proximate result of Defendants' actions, and as persons in the course of doing
business within the meaning of H&S Code § 25249.11, individuals throughout the State of
California, including in San Francisco County, have been exposed to BPA from use of the Products
without having first been provided a clear and reasonable exposure warning. The individuals
subject to the violative exposures include normal and foreseeable users and consumers that use the
Products.

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### SATISFACTION OF NOTICE REQUIREMNTS

20 27. On December 2, 2021, Plaintiff purchased the Product from Jo-Ann Stores. At the
21 time of purchase, Defendants did not provide a Proposition 65 exposure warning for BPA or any
22 other Proposition 65 listed chemical in a manner consistent with H&S Code § 25603.1 as described
23 *supra*.

24 28. On or about January 22, 2022, the Product was sent to a testing laboratory to
25 determine the concentration of BPA present on the surface of the Product.

26 29. On January 24, 2022, the laboratory provided the results of its analysis. Surface
27 BPA was collected using a wipe test. Results of this test concluded the presence of BPA at the
28 surface of the product (the "Chemical Test Report").

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30. Plaintiff provided the Chemical Test Report and Product to an analytical chemist
 to determine if, based on the findings of the Chemical Test Report and the reasonable and
 foreseeable use of the Product, exposure to BPA will occur at levels that require Proposition 65
 warnings under the Clear and Reasonable Warnings section 25601 of Title 27 of the California
 Code of Regulations.

6 31. On January 26, 2022 Plaintiff received from the analytical chemist an exposure
7 assessment report which concluded that persons in California who use the Products will be exposed
8 to levels of BPA that require a Proposition 65 exposure warning.

9 32. On January 27, 2022, Plaintiff gave notice of alleged violation of Health and Safety
10 Code § 25249.6 (the "Notice") to Defendants concerning the exposure of California citizens to
11 BPA from use of the Products without proper warning, subject to a private action to Defendant
12 and to the California Attorney General's office and the offices of the County District attorneys and
13 City Attorneys for each city with a population greater than 750,000 persons wherein the herein
14 violations allegedly occurred.

15 33. The Notice complied with all procedural requirements of Proposition 65 including
16 the attachment of a Certificate of Merit affirming that Plaintiff's counsel had consulted with at
17 least one person with relevant and appropriate expertise who reviewed relevant data regarding
18 BPA exposure, and that counsel believed there was meritorious and reasonable cause for a private
19 action.

34. After receiving the Notice, and to Plaintiff's best information and belief, none of
the noticed appropriate public enforcement agencies have commenced and diligently prosecuted a
cause of action against Defendants under Proposition 65 to enforce the alleged violations which
are the subject of the Notice.

24 35. Plaintiff is commencing this action more than sixty (60) days from the date of the
25 Notice to Defendants, as required by law.

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(By Plaintiff against Defendants for their Violations of Proposition 65)

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF – VIOLATION OF HEALTH & SAFETY CODE §25249.5 36. Plaintiff hereby repeats and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 35 of
 this first amended complaint as though fully set forth herein.

3 37. Each Defendant has, at all times mentioned herein, acted as a distributer and/or
4 retailer of the Products.

38. Use of the Products will expose users and consumers thereof to BPA, a hazardous
chemical found on the Proposition 65 list of chemicals known to be hazardous to human health.

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39. The Products do not comply with the Proposition 65 warning requirements.

8 40. Plaintiff, based on her best information and belief, avers that at all relevant times
9 herein, and at least since January 27, 2022, continuing until the present, that Defendants have
10 continued to knowingly and intentionally expose California users and consumers of the Products
11 to BPA without providing required warnings under Proposition 65.

12 41. The exposures that are the subject of the Notice result from the purchase, 13 acquisition, handling, and recommended use of the Products. The primary route of exposure to 14 BPA from use of the Products is dermal exposure. Dermal exposure to BPA is possible when the 15 user handles the Products, or the Products are placed in contact with exposed areas of the user's 16 skin. If the Products contact hard water and/or soaps at elevated pH, higher extraction rates of BPA 17 and accumulation of BPA at the surface of the Products will result. Additionally, exposure through 18 ingestion will occur by touching the Products with subsequent touching of the user's hand to 19 mouth.

42. Plaintiff, based on her best information and belief, avers that such exposures will
continue every day until clear and reasonable warnings are provided to purchasers and users or
until BPA is removed from the Products.

43. Defendants have knowledge that the normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the
Product exposes individuals to BPA, and Defendants intend those exposures to BPA will occur by
their deliberate, non-accidental participation in the importation, distribution, sale and offering of
the Products to consumers in California.

44. Plaintiff has engaged in good faith efforts to resolve the herein claims prior to the
filing of the first amended complaint.

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1	45. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(b), because of the above-described	
2	acts, Defendants are liable for a maximum civil penalty of \$2,500 per day per violation.	
3	46. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(a), this Court is specifically	
4	authorized to grant injunctive relief in favor of Plaintiff and against Defendants.	
5	PRAYER FOR RELIEF	
6	WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendants and requests the following	
7	relief:	
8	A. That the court assess civil penalties against each Defendant in the amount of \$2,500	
9	per day for each violation for up to 365 days (up to a maximum civil penalty amount per	
10	violation of \$912,000.00) in accordance with Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(b);	
11	B. That the Court preliminarily and permanently enjoin each Defendant mandating	
12	Proposition 65 compliant warnings on the Products;	
13	C. That the Court grant Plaintiff reasonable attorney's fees and costs of suit, in the	
14	amount of \$50,000.00.	
15	D. That the Court grant any further relief as may be just and proper.	
16	Dated: April 20, 2022 BRODSKY & SMITH	
17	By:	
18	Evan J. Smith (SBN242352) Ryan P. Cardona (SBN302113)	
19	9595 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 900 Beverly Hills, CA 90212	
20	Telephone: (877) 534-2590 Facsimile: (310) 247-0160	
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22	Attorneys for Plaintiff	
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	<u>-9-</u> COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF – VIOLATION OF HEALTH & SAFETY CODE §25249.5	