#### Superior Court of California, County of Alameda Reuben Yeroushalmi (SBN 193981) 1 09/12/2023 at 04:13:11 PM reuben@yeroushalmi.com YEROUSHALMI & YEROUSHALMI\* 2 By: Darrell Drew, 9100 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 240W Deputy Clerk 3 Beverly Hills, California 90212 Telephone: (310) 623-1926 4 Facsimile: (310) 623-1930 5 Attorneys for Plaintiff, CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. 6 7 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA 8 COUNTY OF ALAMEDA 9 10 CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC., CASE NO. 23CV043663 11 in the public interest, 12 Plaintiff, COMPLAINT FOR PENALTY AND 13 INJUNCTION v. 14 Violation of Proposition 65, the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement 15 KOREAN FARM, INC., a California Corporation; Act of 1986 (Health & Safety Code, § 16 RHEE BROS. INC., a Maryland 25249.5, et seg.) Corporation; 17 AMAZON.COM, SERVICES, LLC., a ACTION IS AN UNLIMITED CIVIL Delaware Limited Liability Company; 18 CASE (exceeds \$25,000) HANYANG MART, INC., a New York 19 Corporation; and DOES 1-70, 20 Defendants. 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

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COMPLAINT FOR VIOLATION OF PROPOSITION 65, THE SAFE DRINKING WATER AND TOXIC ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 1986 (HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE  $\S$  25249.5, ET SEQ.)

Page 1 of 26

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YEROUSHALMI & YEROUSHALMI \*An Independent Association of Law Corporations Plaintiff CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. alleges nine causes of action against defendants KOREAN FARM, INC.; RHEE BROS., INC.; AMAZON.COM SERVICES, LLC, HANYANG MART, INC., and DOES 1-70 as follows:

### THE PARTIES

- Plaintiff CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. ("Plaintiff" or "CAG") is an
  organization qualified to do business in the State of California. CAG is a person within
  the meaning of Health and Safety Code Section 25249.11, subdivision (a). CAG, acting
  as a private attorney general, brings this action in the public interest as defined under
  Health and Safety Code Section 25249.7, subdivision (d).
- Defendant KOREAN FARM, INC., ("KOREAN FARM") is a California Corporation
  qualified to do business in California and doing business in the State of California at all
  relevant times herein.
- 3. Defendant RHEE BROS., INC., ("RHEE BROS") is a Maryland Corporation doing business in the State of California at all relevant times herein.
- Defendant AMAZON.COM SERVICES, LLC, ("AMAZON SERVICES") is a
   Delaware Limited Liability Company qualified to do business in California and doing
   business in the State of California at all relevant times herein.
- 5. Defendant HANYANG MART, INC. ("HANYANG") is a New York Corporation doing business in the State of California at all relevant times herein.
- 6. Plaintiff is presently unaware of the true names and capacities of defendants DOES 1-70, and therefore sues these defendants by such fictitious names. Plaintiff will amend this Complaint to allege their true names and capacities when ascertained. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each fictitiously named defendant is responsible in some manner for the occurrences herein alleged and the damages caused thereby.
- 7. At all times mentioned herein, the term "Defendants" includes KOREAN FARM, RHEE BROS, AMAZON SERVICES, HANYANG and DOES 1-70.

Page 2 of 26

- 8. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges that each of the Defendants at all times mentioned herein have conducted business within the State of California.
- 9. Upon information and belief, at all times relevant to this action, each of the Defendants, including DOES 1-70, was an agent, servant, or employee of each of the other Defendants. In conducting the activities alleged in this Complaint, each of the Defendants was acting within the course and scope of this agency, service, or employment, and was acting with the consent, permission, and authorization of each of the other Defendants. All actions of each of the Defendants alleged in this Complaint were ratified and approved by every other Defendant or their officers or managing agents. Alternatively, each of the Defendants aided, conspired with and/or facilitated the alleged wrongful conduct of each of the other Defendants.
- 10. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that at all relevant times, each of the Defendants was a person doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code Section 25249.11, subdivision (b), and that each of the Defendants had ten (10) or more employees at all relevant times.

## **JURISDICTION**

- 11. The Court has jurisdiction over this lawsuit pursuant to California Constitution Article VI, Section 10, which grants the Superior Court original jurisdiction in all causes except those given by statute to other trial courts. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 25249.7, which allows enforcement of violations of Proposition 65 in any Court of competent jurisdiction.
- 12. This Court has jurisdiction over Defendants named herein because Defendants either reside or are located in this State or are foreign corporations authorized to do business in California, are registered with the California Secretary of State, or who do sufficient business in California, have sufficient minimum contacts with California, or otherwise intentionally avail themselves of the markets within California through their manufacture, distribution, promotion, marketing, or sale of their products within

- California to render the exercise of jurisdiction by the California courts permissible under traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.
- 13. Venue is proper in the County of Alameda because one or more of the instances of wrongful conduct occurred, and continues to occur, in the County of Alameda and/or because Defendants conducted, and continue to conduct, business in the County of Alameda with respect to the consumer product that is the subject of this action.

# **BACKGROUND AND PRELIMINARY FACTS**

- 14. In 1986, California voters approved an initiative to address growing concerns about exposure to toxic chemicals and declared their right "[t]o be informed about exposures to chemicals that cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive harm." Ballot Pamp., Proposed Law, Gen. Elec. (Nov. 4, 1986) at p. 3. The initiative, The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, codified at Health and Safety Code Sections 25249.5, et seq. ("Proposition 65"), helps to protect California's drinking water sources from contamination, to allow consumers to make informed choices about the products they buy, and to enable persons to protect themselves from toxic chemicals as they see fit.
- 15. Proposition 65 requires the Governor of California to publish a list of chemicals known to the state to cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive harm. *Health & Safety Code* § 25249.8. The list, which the Governor updates at least once a year, contains over 700 chemicals and chemical families. Proposition 65 imposes warning requirements and other controls that apply to Proposition 65-listed chemicals.
- 16. All businesses with ten (10) or more employees that operate or sell products in California must comply with Proposition 65. Under Proposition 65, businesses are: (1) prohibited from knowingly discharging Proposition 65-listed chemicals into sources of drinking water (*Health & Safety Code* § 25249.5), and (2) required to provide "clear and reasonable" warnings before exposing a person, knowingly and intentionally, to a Proposition 65-listed chemical (*Health & Safety Code* § 25249.6).

- 17. Proposition 65 provides that any person "violating or threatening to violate" the statute may be enjoined in any court of competent jurisdiction. Health & Safety Code § 25249.7. "Threaten to violate" means "to create a condition in which there is a substantial probability that a violation will occur." Health & Safety Code § 25249.11(e). Defendants are also liable for civil penalties of up to \$2,500.00 per day per violation, recoverable in a civil action. Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(b).
- 18. Plaintiff identified certain practices of manufacturers and distributors of Dried Mushrooms, Bracken Fern, Dried Anchovy, Dried Bracken Fern, Dried Kelp, and Dried Mushroom of exposing, knowingly and intentionally, persons in California to Lead and Lead Compounds, Cadmium and Cadmium Compounds, and Inorganic Arsenic Compounds and/or Inorganic Arsenic Oxides of such products without first providing clear and reasonable warnings of such to the exposed persons prior to the time of exposure. Plaintiff later discerned that Defendants engaged in such practice.
- 19. On October 1, 1992 the Governor of California added Lead and Lead Compounds ("Lead") to the list of chemicals known to the State to cause cancer (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 27, § 27001(b)). Pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 25249.9 and 25249.10, twenty (20) months after addition of Lead to the list of chemicals known to the State to cause cancer, Lead became fully subject to Proposition 65 warning requirements and discharge prohibitions.
- 20. On February 27, 1987, the Governor of California added Lead to the list of chemicals known to the State to cause developmental and reproductive toxicity (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 27, § 27001(c)). Lead is known to the State to cause developmental, female, and male reproductive toxicity. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 25249.9 and 25249.10, twenty (20) months after addition of Lead to the list of chemicals known to the State to cause developmental and reproductive toxicity, Lead became fully subject to Proposition 65 warning requirements and discharge prohibitions.

- 21. On October 1, 1987 the Governor of California added Cadmium and Cadmium Compounds ("Cadmium") to the list of chemicals known to the State to cause cancer (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 27, § 27001(b)). Pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 25249.9 and 25249.10, twenty (20) months after addition of Cadmium to the list of chemicals known to the State to cause cancer, Cadmium became fully subject to Proposition 65 warning requirements and discharge prohibitions.
- 22. On May 1, 1997, the Governor of California added Cadmium to the list of chemicals known to the State to cause developmental and reproductive toxicity (*Cal. Code Regs.* tit. 27, § 27001(c)). Cadmium is known to the State to cause developmental, and male reproductive toxicity. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 25249.9 and 25249.10, twenty (20) months after addition of Cadmium to the list of chemicals known to the State to cause developmental and reproductive toxicity, Cadmium became fully subject to Proposition 65 warning requirements and discharge prohibitions.
- 23. On May 1, 1997, the Governor of California added Inorganic Arsenic Oxides to the list of chemicals known to the State to cause developmental toxicity (*Cal. Code Regs.* tit. 27, § 27001(c)). Inorganic Arsenic Oxides is known to the State to cause developmental, toxicity. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 25249.9 and 25249.10, twenty (20) months after addition of Inorganic Arsenic Oxides to the list of chemicals known to the State to cause developmental toxicity, Inorganic Arsenic Oxides became fully subject to Proposition 65 warning requirements and discharge prohibitions. Inorganic Arsenic Oxides is hereinafter referred to as "Arsenic".

## **SATISFACTION OF PRIOR NOTICE**

- 24. Plaintiff served the following notices for alleged violations of Health and Safety Code Section 25249.6, concerning consumer products exposures:
  - a. On or about October 25, 2022, Plaintiff gave notice of alleged violations of Health and Safety Code Section 25249.6, concerning consumer products exposures subject to a private action to KOREAN FARM, RHEE BROS. INC.,

Page 6 of 26

Corporations

and to the California Attorney General, County District Attorneys, and City Attorneys for each city containing a population of at least 750,000 people in whose jurisdictions the violations allegedly occurred, concerning the Dried Mushrooms.

- b. On or about November 15, 2022, Plaintiff gave notice of alleged violations of Health and Safety Code Section 25249.6, concerning consumer products exposures subject to a private action to KOREAN FARM, RHEE BROS. INC., and to the California Attorney General, County District Attorneys, and City Attorneys for each city containing a population of at least 750,000 people in whose jurisdictions the violations allegedly occurred, concerning the Bracken Fern.
- c. On or about November 16, 2022, Plaintiff gave notice of alleged violations of Health and Safety Code Section 25249.6, concerning consumer products exposures subject to a private action to KOREAN FARM, RHEE BROS. INC., HANYANG, and to the California Attorney General, County District Attorneys, and City Attorneys for each city containing a population of at least 750,000 people in whose jurisdictions the violations allegedly occurred, concerning the Dried Anchovy.
- d. On or about November 17, 2022, Plaintiff gave notice of alleged violations of Health and Safety Code Section 25249.6, concerning consumer products exposures subject to a private action to KOREAN FARM, RHEE BROS. INC., AMAZON SERVICES, and to the California Attorney General, County District Attorneys, and City Attorneys for each city containing a population of at least 750,000 people in whose jurisdictions the violations allegedly occurred, concerning the Dried Bracken Fern.
- e. On or about November 21, 2022, Plaintiff gave notice of alleged violations of Health and Safety Code Section 25249.6, concerning consumer products

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- f. On or about December 16, 2022, Plaintiff gave notice of alleged violations of Health and Safety Code Section 25249.6, concerning consumer products exposures subject to a private action to KOREAN FARM, RHEE BROS. INC., HANYANG, and to the California Attorney General, County District Attorneys, and City Attorneys for each city containing a population of at least 750,000 people in whose jurisdictions the violations allegedly occurred, concerning the Dried Mushroom.
- g. On or about December 16, 2022, Plaintiff gave notice of alleged violations of Health and Safety Code Section 25249.6, concerning consumer products exposures subject to a private action to KOREAN FARM, RHEE BROS. INC., HANYANG, and to the California Attorney General, County District Attorneys, and City Attorneys for each city containing a population of at least 750,000 people in whose jurisdictions the violations allegedly occurred, concerning the Dried Anchovy.
- 25. Before sending the notice of alleged violations, Plaintiff investigated the consumer products involved, the likelihood that such products would cause users to suffer significant exposures to Lead, Cadmium, and Arsenic and the corporate structure of each of the Defendants.
- 26. Plaintiff's notice of alleged violation included a Certificate of Merit executed by the attorney for the noticing party, CAG. The Certificate of Merit stated that the attorney for Plaintiff who executed the certificate had consulted with at least one person with relevant and appropriate expertise who reviewed data regarding the exposures to Lead, Cadmium,

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\*An Independent Association of Law Corporations and Arsenic the subject Proposition 65-listed chemical of this action. Based on that information, the attorney for Plaintiff who executed the Certificate of Merit believed there was a reasonable and meritorious case for this private action. The attorney for Plaintiff attached to the Certificate of Merit served on the Attorney General the confidential factual information sufficient to establish the basis of the Certificate of Merit.

- 27. Plaintiff's notice of alleged violations also included a Certificate of Service and a document entitled "The Safe Drinking Water & Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (Proposition 65) A Summary." *Health & Safety Code* § 25249.7(d).
- 28. Plaintiff is commencing this action more than sixty (60) days from the dates that Plaintiff gave notice of the alleged violations to KOREAN FARM, RHEE BROS, AMAZON SERVICES, HANYANG, and the public prosecutors referenced in Paragraph 24.
- 29. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that neither the Attorney General, nor any applicable district attorney or city attorney has commenced and is diligently prosecuting an action against the Defendants.

## FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

(By CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. and against KOREAN FARM, RHEE BROS, and DOES 1-30 for Violations of Proposition 65, The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (*Health & Safety Code*, §§ 25249.5, et seq.))

#### Mushrooms

- 30. Plaintiff repeats and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 29 of this complaint as though fully set forth herein.
- 31. Each of the Defendants is, and at all times mentioned herein was, a manufacturer, distributor, promoter, or retailer of Dried Mushrooms, including but not limited to "Assi Brand®"; "Secher Champignon Dried Mushroom"; "Imported by Rhee Bros., Inc.; Korean Farm, Inc.; New Japan Food Corp.; R&G Corp." "Product of China"; "www.rheebros.com"; "UPC 0 81652 06061 1".

Page 9 of 26

- 32. Dried Mushrooms contains Cadmium.
- 33. Defendants knew or should have known that Cadmium has been identified by the State of California as a chemical known to cause cancer, developmental and reproductive toxicity and therefore was subject to Proposition 65 warning requirements. Defendants were also informed of the presence of Cadmium in Dried Mushrooms within Plaintiff's notice of alleged violations further discussed above at Paragraph 24a.
- 34. Plaintiff's allegations regarding Dried Mushrooms concerns "[c]onsumer products exposure[s]," which "is an exposure that 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." *Cal. Code Regs.* tit. 27, § 25602(b). Dried Mushrooms are consumer products, and, as mentioned herein, exposures to Cadmium took place as a result of such normal and foreseeable consumption and use.
- 35. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that between October 25, 2019 and the present, each of the Defendants knowingly and intentionally exposed California consumers and users of Dried Mushrooms, which Defendants manufactured, distributed, or sold as mentioned above, to Cadmium without first providing any type of clear and reasonable warning of such to the exposed persons before the time of exposure.

  Defendants have distributed and sold Dried Mushrooms in California. Defendants know and intend that California consumers will use and consume Dried Mushrooms, thereby exposing them to Cadmium. Further, Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that Defendants are selling Dried Mushrooms under a brand or trademark that is owned or licensed by the Defendants or an entity affiliated thereto; have knowingly introduced Cadmium into product or knowingly caused Cadmium to be created in Dried Mushrooms; have covered, obscured or altered a warning label that has been affixed to Dried Mushrooms by the manufacturer, producer, packager, importer, supplier or distributor of Dried Mushrooms; have received a notice and warning materials for

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- exposure from Dried Mushrooms without conspicuously posting or displaying the warning materials; and/or have actual knowledge of potential exposure to relevant chemical from Dried Mushrooms. Defendants thereby violated Proposition 65.
- 36. The principal routes of exposure are through ingestion, especially direct (oral) ingestion, inhalation, and trans-dermal absorption. Persons sustain exposures primarily by eating and consuming Dried Mushrooms, and additionally by handling Dried Mushrooms without wearing gloves or any other personal protective equipment, or by touching bare skin or mucous membranes with gloves after handling Dried Mushrooms, as well as through direct and indirect hand to mouth contact, hand to mucous membrane, or even breathing in particulate matter dispersed from Dried Mushrooms.
- 37. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each of Defendants' violations of Proposition 65 as to Dried Mushrooms have been ongoing and continuous, as Defendants engaged and continue to engage in conduct which violates Health and Safety Code Section 25249.6, including the manufacture, distribution, promotion, and sale of Dried Mushrooms, so that a separate and distinct violation of Proposition 65 occurred each and every time a person was exposed to Cadmium by Dried Mushrooms as mentioned herein.
- 38. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each violation of Proposition 65 mentioned herein is ever continuing. Plaintiff further alleges and believes that the violations alleged herein will continue to occur into the future.
- 39. Based on the allegations herein, Defendants are liable for civil penalties of up to \$2,500.00 per day per individual exposure to Cadmium from Dried Mushrooms, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 25249.7(b).
- 40. Plaintiff has engaged in good faith efforts to resolve the claims alleged herein prior to filing this Complaint.

### SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

(By CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. and against KOREAN FARM, RHEE BROS, and DOES 1-20 for Violations of Proposition 65, The Safe Drinking

Page 11 of 26

YEROUSHALMI

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#### **Dried Plant**

- 41. Plaintiff repeats and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 40 of this complaint as though fully set forth herein.
- 42. Each of the Defendants is, and at all times mentioned herein was, a manufacturer, distributor, promoter, or retailer of Bracken Fern, including but not limited to "Assi®"; "Dried Bracken Fern"; "Net Wt. 8 oz (226 g)"; "Imported by Rhee Bros., Inc., Korean Farm, Inc."; "Product of China"; "Rheebros.com"; UPC 0 81652 06091 8".
- 43. Bracken Fern contains Lead and Cadmium.
- 44. Defendants knew or should have known that Lead and Cadmium have been identified by the State of California as chemicals known to cause cancer, developmental and reproductive toxicity and therefore were subject to Proposition 65 warning requirements. Defendants were also informed of the presence of Lead and Cadmium in Bracken Fern within Plaintiff's notice of alleged violations further discussed above at Paragraph 24b.
- 45. Plaintiff's allegations regarding Bracken Fern concerns "[c]onsumer products exposure[s]," which "is an exposure that 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." *Cal. Code Regs.* tit. 27, § 25602(b). Bracken Fern is a consumer product, and, as mentioned herein, exposures to Lead and Cadmium took place as a result of such normal and foreseeable consumption and use.
- 46. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that between November 15, 2019 and the present, each of the Defendants knowingly and intentionally exposed California consumers and users of Bracken Fern, which Defendants manufactured, distributed, or sold as mentioned above, to Lead and Cadmium, without first providing any type of clear and reasonable warning of such to the exposed persons before the time of exposure.
  Defendants have distributed and sold Bracken Fern in California. Defendants know and

intend that California consumers will use and consume Bracken Fern, thereby exposing them to Lead and Cadmium. Further, Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that Defendants are selling Bracken Fern under a brand or trademark that is owned or licensed by the Defendants or an entity affiliated thereto; have knowingly introduced Lead and Cadmium into product or knowingly caused Lead and Cadmium to be created in Bracken Fern; have covered, obscured or altered a warning label that has been affixed to Bracken Fern by the manufacturer, producer, packager, importer, supplier or distributor of Bracken Fern; have received a notice and warning materials for exposure from Bracken Fern without conspicuously posting or displaying the warning materials; and/or have actual knowledge of potential exposure to relevant chemical from Bracken Fern. Defendants thereby violated Proposition 65.

- 47. The principal routes of exposure are through ingestion, especially direct (oral) ingestion, inhalation, and trans-dermal absorption. Persons sustain exposures primarily by eating and consuming Bracken Fern, and additionally by handling Bracken Fern without wearing gloves or any other personal protective equipment, or by touching bare skin or mucous membranes with gloves after handling Bracken Fern, as well as through direct and indirect hand to mouth contact, hand to mucous membrane, or even breathing in particulate matter dispersed from Bracken Fern.
- 48. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each of Defendants' violations of Proposition 65 as to Bracken Fern have been ongoing and continuous, as Defendants engaged and continue to engage in conduct which violates Health and Safety Code Section 25249.6, including the manufacture, distribution, promotion, and sale of Bracken Fern, so that a separate and distinct violation of Proposition 65 occurred each and every time a person was exposed to Lead and Cadmium by Bracken Fern as mentioned herein.
- 49. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each violation of Proposition 65 mentioned herein is ever continuing. Plaintiff further alleges and believes that the violations alleged herein will continue to occur into the future.

- 50. Based on the allegations herein, Defendants are liable for civil penalties of up to \$2,500.00 per day per individual exposure to Lead and Cadmium from Bracken Fern, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 25249.7(b).
- 51. Plaintiff has engaged in good faith efforts to resolve the claims alleged herein prior to filing this Complaint.

## THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

(By CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. and against KOREAN FARM, RHEE BROS, HANYANG, and DOES 1-30 for Violations of Proposition 65, The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (*Health & Safety Code*, §§ 25249.5, et seq.))

#### Seafood Product

- 52. Plaintiff repeats and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 51 of this complaint as though fully set forth herein.
- 53. Each of the Defendants is, and at all times mentioned herein was, a manufacturer, distributor, promoter, or retailer of Dried Anchovy, including but not limited to "Yissine"; "Dried Small Anchovy"; "Net Wt. 1 lb (453 g)"; "Product of Korea"; "2023.12.15"; "Imported by Rhee Bros., Inc., Korean Farm, Inc."; "227041"; "UPC 0 81652 27041 6".
- 54. Dried Anchovy contains Lead and Cadmium.
- 55. Defendants knew or should have known that Lead and Cadmium have been identified by the State of California as chemicals known to cause cancer, developmental and reproductive toxicity and therefore were subject to Proposition 65 warning requirements. Defendants were also informed of the presence of Lead and Cadmium in Dried Anchovy within Plaintiff's notice of alleged violations further discussed above at Paragraph 24c.
- 56. Plaintiff's allegations regarding Dried Anchovy concerns "[c]onsumer products exposure[s]," which "is an exposure that 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." *Cal. Code Regs.* tit. 27, §

25602(b). Dried Anchovy is a consumer product, and, as mentioned herein, exposures to Lead and Cadmium took place as a result of such normal and foreseeable consumption and use.

- 57. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that between November 16, 2019 and the present, each of the Defendants knowingly and intentionally exposed California consumers and users of Dried Anchovy, which Defendants manufactured, distributed, or sold as mentioned above, to Lead and Cadmium, without first providing any type of clear and reasonable warning of such to the exposed persons before the time of exposure. Defendants have distributed and sold Dried Anchovy in California. Defendants know and intend that California consumers will use and consume Dried Anchovy, thereby exposing them to Lead and Cadmium. Further, Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that Defendants are selling Dried Anchovy under a brand or trademark that is owned or licensed by the Defendants or an entity affiliated thereto; have knowingly introduced Lead and Cadmium into product or knowingly caused Lead and Cadmium to be created in Dried Anchovy; have covered, obscured or altered a warning label that has been affixed to Dried Anchovy by the manufacturer, producer, packager, importer, supplier or distributor of Dried Anchovy; have received a notice and warning materials for exposure from Dried Anchovy without conspicuously posting or displaying the warning materials; and/or have actual knowledge of potential exposure to relevant chemical from Dried Anchovy. Defendants thereby violated Proposition 65.
- 58. The principal routes of exposure are through ingestion, especially direct (oral) ingestion, inhalation, and trans-dermal absorption. Persons sustain exposures primarily by eating and consuming Dried Anchovy, and additionally by handling Dried Anchovy without wearing gloves or any other personal protective equipment, or by touching bare skin or mucous membranes with gloves after handling Dried Anchovy, as well as through direct and indirect hand to mouth contact, hand to mucous membrane, or even breathing in particulate matter dispersed from Dried Anchovy.

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- 59. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each of Defendants' violations of Proposition 65 as to Dried Anchovy have been ongoing and continuous, as Defendants engaged and continue to engage in conduct which violates Health and Safety Code Section 25249.6, including the manufacture, distribution, promotion, and sale of Dried Anchovy, so that a separate and distinct violation of Proposition 65 occurred each and every time a person was exposed to Lead and Cadmium by Dried Anchovy as mentioned herein.
- 60. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each violation of Proposition 65 mentioned herein is ever continuing. Plaintiff further alleges and believes that the violations alleged herein will continue to occur into the future.
- 61. Based on the allegations herein, Defendants are liable for civil penalties of up to \$2,500.00 per day per individual exposure to Lead and Cadmium from Dried Anchovy, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 25249.7(b).
- 62. Plaintiff has engaged in good faith efforts to resolve the claims alleged herein prior to filing this Complaint.

## FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION

(By CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. and against KOREAN FARM, RHEE BROS, AMAZON SERVICES, and DOES 1-40 for Violations of Proposition 65, The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (Health & Safety Code, §§ 25249.5, et seq.))

### **Dried Plant**

- 63. Plaintiff repeats and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 62 of this complaint as though fully set forth herein.
- 64. Each of the Defendants is, and at all times mentioned herein was, a manufacturer, distributor, promoter, or retailer of Dried Bracken Fern, including but not limited to "Assi®"; "Dried Bracken Fern"; "Net Wt. 8 oz (226 g)"; "Imported by Rhee Bros., Korean Farm, Inc."; "Product of China"; "Rheebros.com"; "206099"; "Best By: 09-25-2023"; "X001QLGE53"; "UPC 0 81652 06099 4".

- 65. Dried Bracken Fern contains Lead and Cadmium.
- 66. Defendants knew or should have known that Lead and Cadmium have been identified by the State of California as chemicals known to cause cancer, developmental and reproductive toxicity and therefore were subject to Proposition 65 warning requirements. Defendants were also informed of the presence of Lead and Cadmium in Dried Bracken Fern within Plaintiff's notice of alleged violations further discussed above at Paragraph 24d.
- 67. Plaintiff's allegations regarding Dried Bracken Fern concerns "[c]onsumer products exposure[s]," which "is an exposure that 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." *Cal. Code Regs.* tit. 27, § 25602(b). Dried Bracken Fern is a consumer product, and, as mentioned herein, exposures to Lead and Cadmium took place as a result of such normal and foreseeable consumption and use.
- 68. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that between November 17, 2019 and the present, each of the Defendants knowingly and intentionally exposed California consumers and users of Dried Bracken Fern, which Defendants manufactured, distributed, or sold as mentioned above, to Lead and Cadmium, without first providing any type of clear and reasonable warning of such to the exposed persons before the time of exposure. Defendants have distributed and sold Dried Bracken Fern in California. Defendants know and intend that California consumers will use and consume Dried Bracken Fern, thereby exposing them to Lead and Cadmium. Further, Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that Defendants are selling Dried Bracken Fern under a brand or trademark that is owned or licensed by the Defendants or an entity affiliated thereto; have knowingly introduced Lead and Cadmium into product or knowingly caused Lead and Cadmium to be created in Dried Bracken Fern; have covered, obscured or altered a warning label that has been affixed to Dried Bracken Fern

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by the manufacturer, producer, packager, importer, supplier or distributor of Dried Bracken Fern; have received a notice and warning materials for exposure from Dried Bracken Fern without conspicuously posting or displaying the warning materials; and/or have actual knowledge of potential exposure to relevant chemical from Dried Bracken Fern. Defendants thereby violated Proposition 65.

- 69. The principal routes of exposure are through ingestion, especially direct (oral) ingestion, inhalation, and trans-dermal absorption. Persons sustain exposures primarily by eating and consuming Dried Bracken Fern, and additionally by handling Dried Bracken Fern without wearing gloves or any other personal protective equipment, or by touching bare skin or mucous membranes with gloves after handling Dried Bracken Fern, as well as through direct and indirect hand to mouth contact, hand to mucous membrane, or even breathing in particulate matter dispersed from Dried Bracken Fern.
- 70. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each of Defendants' violations of Proposition 65 as to Dried Bracken Fern have been ongoing and continuous, as Defendants engaged and continue to engage in conduct which violates Health and Safety Code Section 25249.6, including the manufacture, distribution, promotion, and sale of Dried Bracken Fern, so that a separate and distinct violation of Proposition 65 occurred each and every time a person was exposed to Lead and Cadmium by Dried Bracken Fern as mentioned herein.
- 71. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each violation of Proposition 65 mentioned herein is ever continuing. Plaintiff further alleges and believes that the violations alleged herein will continue to occur into the future.
- 72. Based on the allegations herein, Defendants are liable for civil penalties of up to \$2,500.00 per day per individual exposure to Lead and Cadmium from Dried Bracken Fern, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 25249.7(b).
- 73. Plaintiff has engaged in good faith efforts to resolve the claims alleged herein prior to filing this Complaint.

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## **FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

(By CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. and against KOREAN FARM, RHEE BROS, AMAZON SERVICES, and DOES 1-50 for Violations of Proposition 65, The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (Health & Safety Code, §§ 25249.5, et seq.))

### Seaweed

- 74. Plaintiff repeats and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 73 of this complaint as though fully set forth herein.
- 75. Each of the Defendants is, and at all times mentioned herein was, a manufacturer, distributor, promoter, or retailer of Dried Kelp, including but not limited to "Assi Brand ®"; "Dried Kelp"; "Net Wt. 2 oz (56 g)"; "2023.08.10"; "Imported by Rhee Bros., Inc.; Korean Farm, Inc.; New Japan Food Corp.; R&G Corp."; "Product of Korea"; "www.rheebros.com"; "UPC 0 81652 07105 1".
- 76. Dried Kelp contains Arsenic.
- 77. Defendants knew or should have known that Arsenic has been identified by the State of California as a chemical known to cause cancer, developmental and reproductive toxicity and therefore was subject to Proposition 65 warning requirements. Defendants were also informed of the presence of Arsenic in Dried Kelp within Plaintiff's notice of alleged violations further discussed above at Paragraph 24e.
- 78. Plaintiff's allegations regarding Dried Kelp concerns "[c]onsumer products exposure[s]," which "is an exposure that 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." *Cal. Code Regs.* tit. 27, § 25602(b). Dried Kelp is a consumer product, and, as mentioned herein, exposures to Arsenic took place as a result of such normal and foreseeable consumption and use.
- 79. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that between November 21, 2019 and the present, each of the Defendants knowingly and intentionally exposed California consumers and users of Dried Kelp, which Defendants manufactured, distributed, or sold as mentioned above, to Arsenic, without first providing any type of clear and reasonable

warning of such to the exposed persons before the time of exposure. Defendants have distributed and sold Dried Kelp in California. Defendants know and intend that California consumers will use and consume Dried Kelp, thereby exposing them to Arsenic. Further, Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that Defendants are selling Dried Kelp under a brand or trademark that is owned or licensed by the Defendants or an entity affiliated thereto; have knowingly introduced Arsenic into product or knowingly caused Arsenic to be created in Dried Kelp; have covered, obscured or altered a warning label that has been affixed to Dried Kelp by the manufacturer, producer, packager, importer, supplier or distributor of Dried Kelp; have received a notice and warning materials for exposure from Dried Kelp without conspicuously posting or displaying the warning materials; and/or have actual knowledge of potential exposure to relevant chemical from Dried Kelp. Defendants thereby violated Proposition 65.

- 80. The principal routes of exposure are through ingestion, especially direct (oral) ingestion, inhalation, and trans-dermal absorption. Persons sustain exposures primarily by eating and consuming Dried Kelp, and additionally by handling Dried Kelp without wearing gloves or any other personal protective equipment, or by touching bare skin or mucous membranes with gloves after handling Dried Kelp, as well as through direct and indirect hand to mouth contact, hand to mucous membrane, or even breathing in particulate matter dispersed from Dried Kelp.
- 81. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each of Defendants' violations of Proposition 65 as to Dried Kelp have been ongoing and continuous, as Defendants engaged and continue to engage in conduct which violates Health and Safety Code Section 25249.6, including the manufacture, distribution, promotion, and sale of Dried Kelp, so that a separate and distinct violation of Proposition 65 occurred each and every time a person was exposed to Arsenic by Dried Kelp as mentioned herein.

27

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26

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Page 20 of 26

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- 82. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each violation of Proposition 65 mentioned herein is ever continuing. Plaintiff further alleges and believes that the violations alleged herein will continue to occur into the future.
- 83. Based on the allegations herein, Defendants are liable for civil penalties of up to \$2,500.00 per day per individual exposure to Arsenic from Dried Kelp, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 25249.7(b).
- 84. Plaintiff has engaged in good faith efforts to resolve the claims alleged herein prior to filing this Complaint.

## SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION

(By CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. and against KOREAN FARM, RHEE BROS, HANYANG, and DOES 1-60 for Violations of Proposition 65, The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (*Health & Safety Code*, §§ 25249.5, et seq.))

#### Mushroom

- 85. Plaintiff repeats and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 84 of this complaint as though fully set forth herein.
- 86. Each of the Defendants is, and at all times mentioned herein was, a manufacturer, distributor, promoter, or retailer of Dried Mushroom, including but not limited to "Assi"; "Dried Shiitake Mushroom"; "Net Wt. 8 oz (226 g)"; "12.15.2023"; "Imported by Rhee Bros., Inc.; Korean Farm, Inc."; "Product of China"; "UPC 0 81652 06061 1".
- 87. Dried Mushroom contains Lead and Cadmium.
- 88. Defendants knew or should have known that Lead and Cadmium have been identified by the State of California as chemicals known to cause cancer, developmental and reproductive toxicity and therefore were subject to Proposition 65 warning requirements. Defendants were also informed of the presence of Lead and Cadmium in Dried Mushroom within Plaintiff's notice of alleged violations further discussed above at Paragraph 24f.

- 89. Plaintiff's allegations regarding Dried Mushroom concerns "[c]onsumer products exposure[s]," which "is an exposure that 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." *Cal. Code Regs.* tit. 27, § 25602(b). Dried Mushroom is a consumer product, and, as mentioned herein, exposures to Lead and Cadmium took place as a result of such normal and foreseeable consumption and use.
- 90. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that between December 16, 2019 and the present, each of the Defendants knowingly and intentionally exposed California consumers and users of Dried Mushroom, which Defendants manufactured, distributed, or sold as mentioned above, to Lead and Cadmium, without first providing any type of clear and reasonable warning of such to the exposed persons before the time of exposure. Defendants have distributed and sold Dried Mushroom in California. Defendants know and intend that California consumers will use and consume Dried Mushroom, thereby exposing them to Lead and Cadmium. Further, Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that Defendants are selling Dried Mushroom under a brand or trademark that is owned or licensed by the Defendants or an entity affiliated thereto; have knowingly introduced Lead and Cadmium into product or knowingly caused Lead and Cadmium to be created in Dried Mushroom; have covered, obscured or altered a warning label that has been affixed to Dried Mushroom by the manufacturer, producer, packager, importer, supplier or distributor of Dried Mushroom; have received a notice and warning materials for exposure from Dried Mushroom without conspicuously posting or displaying the warning materials; and/or have actual knowledge of potential exposure to relevant chemical from Dried Mushroom. Defendants thereby violated Proposition 65.
- 91. The principal routes of exposure are through ingestion, especially direct (oral) ingestion, inhalation, and trans-dermal absorption. Persons sustain exposures primarily by eating and consuming Dried Mushroom, and additionally by handling Dried Mushroom without

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wearing gloves or any other personal protective equipment, or by touching bare skin or mucous membranes with gloves after handling Dried Mushroom, as well as through direct and indirect hand to mouth contact, hand to mucous membrane, or even breathing in particulate matter dispersed from Dried Mushroom.

- 92. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each of Defendants' violations of Proposition 65 as to Dried Mushroom have been ongoing and continuous, as Defendants engaged and continue to engage in conduct which violates Health and Safety Code Section 25249.6, including the manufacture, distribution, promotion, and sale of Dried Mushroom, so that a separate and distinct violation of Proposition 65 occurred each and every time a person was exposed to Lead and Cadmium by Dried Mushroom as mentioned herein.
- 93. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each violation of Proposition 65 mentioned herein is ever continuing. Plaintiff further alleges and believes that the violations alleged herein will continue to occur into the future.
- 94. Based on the allegations herein, Defendants are liable for civil penalties of up to \$2,500.00 per day per individual exposure to Lead and Cadmium from Dried Mushroom, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 25249.7(b).
- 95. Plaintiff has engaged in good faith efforts to resolve the claims alleged herein prior to filing this Complaint.

# **SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

(By CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. and against KOREAN FARM, RHEE BROS, HANYANG, and DOES 1-70 for Violations of Proposition 65, The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (Health & Safety Code, §§ 25249.5, et seq.))

# Anchovy

96. Plaintiff repeats and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 95 of this complaint as though fully set forth herein.

- 97. Each of the Defendants is, and at all times mentioned herein was, a manufacturer, distributor, promoter, or retailer of Dried Anchovy, including but not limited to "Assi"; "Artisan Asian Food Since 1976"; "Dried Anchovy"; "Net Wt. 12 oz (340 g)"; "2024.01.10"; "Imported by Rhee Bros., Inc.; Korean Farm, Inc."; "Product of China"; "UPC 0 81652 27080 5".
- 98. Dried Anchovy contains Lead.
- 99. Defendants knew or should have known that Lead has been identified by the State of California as a chemical known to cause cancer, developmental and reproductive toxicity and therefore was subject to Proposition 65 warning requirements. Defendants were also informed of the presence of Lead in Dried Anchovy within Plaintiff's notice of alleged violations further discussed above at Paragraph 24g.
- 100. Plaintiff's allegations regarding Dried Anchovy concerns "[c]onsumer products exposure[s]," which "is an exposure that 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." *Cal. Code Regs.* tit. 27, § 25602(b). Dried Anchovy is a consumer product, and, as mentioned herein, exposures to Lead took place as a result of such normal and foreseeable consumption and use.
- 101. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that between December 16, 2019 and the present, each of the Defendants knowingly and intentionally exposed California consumers and users of Dried Anchovy, which Defendants manufactured, distributed, or sold as mentioned above, to Lead, without first providing any type of clear and reasonable warning of such to the exposed persons before the time of exposure.

  Defendants have distributed and sold Dried Anchovy in California. Defendants know and intend that California consumers will use and consume Dried Anchovy, thereby exposing them to Lead. Further, Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that Defendants are selling Dried Anchovy under a brand or trademark that is owned or licensed by the Defendants or an entity affiliated thereto; have knowingly introduced

Association of Law Corporations

Lead into product or knowingly caused Lead to be created in Dried Anchovy; have covered, obscured or altered a warning label that has been affixed to Dried Anchovy by the manufacturer, producer, packager, importer, supplier or distributor of Dried Anchovy; have received a notice and warning materials for exposure from Dried Anchovy without conspicuously posting or displaying the warning materials; and/or have actual knowledge of potential exposure to relevant chemical from Dried Anchovy. Defendants thereby violated Proposition 65.

- ingestion, inhalation, and trans-dermal absorption. Persons sustain exposures primarily by eating and consuming Dried Anchovy, and additionally by handling Dried Anchovy without wearing gloves or any other personal protective equipment, or by touching bare skin or mucous membranes with gloves after handling Dried Anchovy, as well as through direct and indirect hand to mouth contact, hand to mucous membrane, or even breathing in particulate matter dispersed from Dried Anchovy.
- 103. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each of Defendants' violations of Proposition 65 as to Dried Anchovy have been ongoing and continuous, as Defendants engaged and continue to engage in conduct which violates Health and Safety Code Section 25249.6, including the manufacture, distribution, promotion, and sale of Dried Anchovy, so that a separate and distinct violation of Proposition 65 occurred each and every time a person was exposed to Lead by Dried Anchovy as mentioned herein.
- 104. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges that each violation of Proposition 65 mentioned herein is ever continuing. Plaintiff further alleges and believes that the violations alleged herein will continue to occur into the future.
- 105. Based on the allegations herein, Defendants are liable for civil penalties of up to \$2,500.00 per day per individual exposure to Lead from Dried Anchovy, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 25249.7(b).

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