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County of Santa Clara
23CV427724
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KEEP AMERICA SAFE AND BEAUTIFUL

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA
UNLIMITED CIVIL JURISDICTION
23CV427724

KEEP AMERICA SAFE AND BEAUTIFUL,

Plaintiff,

v.

EDELSTEIN DIVERSIFIED SPECIALTIES,
LTD.; ECHOTAPE USA INC.; and DOES 1-
30, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.

**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES
AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

Violation of Proposition 65, The Safe
Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act
of 1986 (Health & Safety Code § 25249.5 *et
seq.*)

UNLIMITED CIVIL

1 Plaintiff KEEP AMERICA SAFE AND BEAUTIFUL, acting in the public interest, alleges a
2 cause of action against Defendants EDELSTEIN DIVERSIFIED SPECIALTIES, LTD.,
3 ECHOTAPE USA INC. and DOES 1-30.

4 **INTRODUCTION AND NATURE OF THE ACTION**

5 1. This Complaint is a representative action brought by plaintiff Keep America Safe and
6 Beautiful (“**KASB**”) in the public interest of the citizens of the State of California to enforce the
7 People’s right to be informed of the health hazards caused by exposures to diisononyl phthalate
8 (“**DINP**”), a toxic chemical found in and on the vinyl/PVC tape manufactured, imported, distributed,
9 sold or offered for sale by Defendants in the State of California.

10 2. By this Complaint, plaintiff seeks to remedy Defendants’ continuing failure to warn
11 individuals not covered by California’s Occupational Safety Health Act, Labor Code § 6300 *et seq.*
12 (“**consumers**”) they are being exposed to substances known to the State of California to cause birth
13 defects or other reproductive harm through exposures to DINP, when they purchase, use or handle
14 Defendants’ vinyl/PVC tape.

15 3. Detectable levels of DINP are found in and on the vinyl/PVC tape that Defendants
16 manufacture, import, sell or distribute for sale to individuals throughout California.

17 4. Pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, codified at
18 Health and Safety Code § 25249.6 *et seq.* (“**Proposition 65**”), it is unlawful for a person in the course
19 of doing business to knowingly and intentionally expose consumers in California to chemicals known
20 to the State to cause cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm, without first providing a “clear
21 and reasonable” health hazard warning to such individuals prior to purchase or use.

22 5. KASB contends and alleges Defendants manufacture, distribute, import, sell, and offer
23 for sale, in and into California vinyl/PVC tape (“**PRODUCTS**”) containing DINP, without
24 Proposition 65’s requisite health hazard warning regarding the harms associated with exposures to the
25 chemical, including, but not limited to, *VI-V6115 General Purpose Vinyl Floor Marking & Color*
26 *Coding Tape*. Defendants’ conduct subjects them to civil penalties for each violation, enjoinder as
27 well as preliminary and permanent injunctive relief. Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(a) and (b).

1 **PARTIES**

2 6. Plaintiff KASB is a non-profit corporation organized under the laws of California and
3 proceeding in the interest of the general public, dedicated to protecting the health of California
4 citizens and the environment through the elimination or reduction of toxic chemicals utilized in
5 manufacturing consumer products and to increasing public awareness of those chemicals through the
6 promotion of sound environmental practices and corporate responsibility. KASB is a person within
7 the meaning of Health & Safety Code § 25249.11(a), and it brings this action in the public interest,
8 pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(d).

9 7. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges, at all relevant times, Defendant
10 EDELSTEIN DIVERSIFIED SPECIALTIES, LTD. (“EDELSTEIN”) was and is a “person” “in the
11 course of doing business” with ten (10) or more employees, within the meanings of Health and Safety
12 Code §§ 25249.6 and 25249.11.

13 8. EDELSTEIN manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the PRODUCTS
14 for sale or use in the State of California, or implies by its conduct that it manufactures, imports,
15 distributes, sells, and/or offers the PRODUCTS for sale or use in the State of California.

16 9. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and thereon alleges, at all relevant times, Defendant
17 ECHOTAPE USA INC. (“ECHOTAPE”) was and is a “person” “in the course of doing business”
18 with ten (10) or more employees, within the meanings of Health and Safety Code §§ 25249.6 and
19 25249.11.

20 10. ECHOTAPE imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the PRODUCTS for sale or use
21 in the State of California, or implies by its conduct that it imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the
22 PRODUCTS for sale or use in the State of California.

23 11. Defendants DOES 1-10 (“MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS”) are each a person
24 in the course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code §§ 25249.6 and
25 25249.11. MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS, and each of them, assemble, fabricate, and
26 manufacture, or each implies by its conduct that it does such for one or more of the PRODUCTS
27 offered for sale or use in California.
28

1 12. Defendants DOES 11-20 (“**DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS**”) are each a person in
2 the course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code §§ 25249.6 and 25249.11.
3 **DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS**, and each of them, distribute, transfer, and transport, or each
4 impliedly does so by its conduct, one or more of the **PRODUCTS** to individuals, businesses, or
5 retailers for sale or use in the State of California

6 13. Defendants DOES 21-30 (“**RETAILER DEFENDANTS**”) are each a person in the
7 course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code §§ 25249.6 and 25249.11.
8 **RETAILER DEFENDANTS**, and each of them, by and through their conduct, offer the **PRODUCTS**
9 for sale to individuals in the State of California.

10 14. At this time, the true names of Defendants DOES 1 through 30, inclusive, are
11 unknown to plaintiff, who, therefore, sues said DOES Defendants by their fictitious names, pursuant
12 to Code of Civil Procedure § 474. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, each
13 of the fictitiously named Defendants is responsible in some manner for the acts and occurrences
14 alleged herein and the damages caused thereby. When ascertained, their true names and capacities
15 shall be reflected in an amended complaint.

16 15. At all times mentioned herein, **EDELSTEIN, ECHOTAPE, MANUFACTURER**
17 **DEFENDANTS, DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS, and RETAILER DEFENDANTS** shall,
18 hereinafter, where appropriate, be referred to collectively as the “**DEFENDANTS.**”

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

19
20 16. This Court has jurisdiction over this action, pursuant to Cal. Health & Safety Code
21 § 25249.7, allowing enforcement by any court of competent jurisdiction. The California Superior
22 Court has jurisdiction over this action, pursuant to California Constitution Article VI, section 10,
23 which grants the Superior Court “original jurisdiction in all causes except those given by statute to
24 other trial courts.” The statute under which this action is brought does not specify any other basis of
25 subject matter jurisdiction.

26 17. The California Superior Court has jurisdiction over **DEFENDANTS**, based on
27 plaintiff’s information and good faith belief **DEFENDANTS** are each a person, firm, corporation or
28 association that is a citizen of the State of California, does sufficient business in California, has

1 sufficient minimum contacts in California, and/or otherwise purposefully and intentionally avail
2 themselves of the California market through their manufacture, importation, distribution, promotion,
3 marketing or sale of PRODUCTS within the State. DEFENDANTS’ purposeful availment renders
4 the exercise of personal jurisdiction by California courts consistent with traditional notions of fair
5 play and substantial justice.

6 18. Venue is proper in the Superior Court for the County of Santa Clara, pursuant to Code
7 of Civil Procedure §§ 393, 395, and 395.5, because this Court is a court of competent jurisdiction,
8 because plaintiff seeks civil penalties against DEFENDANTS, because one or more instances of
9 wrongful conduct occurred, and continue to occur, in this county, and/or because DEFENDANTS
10 conducted, and continue to conduct, business in the County of Santa Clara with respect to the
11 PRODUCTS that are the subject of this action.

12 **REGULATORY BACKGROUND AND LAW**

13 19. In 1986, the people of the State of California approved an initiative addressing the
14 harms caused by hazardous chemicals and declared their right “[t]o be informed about exposures to
15 chemicals that cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive harm.” Ballot Pamp., Proposed
16 General Law, Gen, Elec. (Nov. 4, 1986) at p.3.

17 20. Formally known as the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 and
18 codified at Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 *et seq.*, Proposition 65 states, in relevant part, “[n]o
19 person in the course of doing business shall knowingly and intentionally expose any individual to a
20 chemical known to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without first giving a clear and reasonable
21 warning to such individual...”

22 21. Under the Act, a “person in the course of doing business” is defined as a business with
23 ten (10) or more employees. Health & Safety Code § 25249.11(b). Businesses are prohibited from
24 exposing individuals to hazardous chemicals without first giving a “clear and reasonable” warning.
25 Health & Safety Code § 25249.6.

26 22. Exposing individuals to hazardous chemicals means to cause individuals to ingest,
27 inhale, contact via body surfaces or otherwise come into contact with a listed chemical. 27 CCR
28 § 25102(i). An exposure to a hazardous chemical is defined as one that “results from a person’s

1 acquisition, purchase, storage, consumption or other reasonably foreseeable use of a product...”
2 27 C.C.R. § 25600(h).

3 23. Under Proposition 65, persons violating the statute may be enjoined in any court of
4 competent jurisdiction and may be subject to civil penalties of up to \$2,500 per day, per violation.
5 Health & Safety Code § 25249.7.

6 24. On December 20, 2013, pursuant to Proposition 65’s implementing regulations,
7 California identified and listed DINP as a chemical known to the State cause cancer. DINP became
8 subject to the “clear and reasonable warning” requirements one year later, on December 20, 2014.
9 Cal. Code Regs. tit. 27, § 27001(c); Health & Safety Code §§ 25249.8, 25249.10(b).

10 **STATEMENT OF FACTS**

11 25. Plaintiff purchased DEFENDANTS’ PRODUCTS, without a warning, in California.

12 26. Plaintiff investigated and tested DEFENDANTS’ PRODUCTS at an accredited lab,
13 and consulted with a person with relevant and appropriate knowledge and expertise, who, after
14 reviewing the collected data and analyzing the risk of exposure to DINP, determined the PRODUCTS
15 subject consumers in California to exposure to the listed chemical at levels requiring a warning under
16 the statute, based on touching, handling or otherwise utilizing PRODUCTS in accordance with their
17 reasonably foreseeable and intended usages.

18 27. Based on the foregoing, Plaintiff’s attorney executed a certificate of merit, attesting
19 there was a reasonable and meritorious case for this private action and included the factual
20 information supporting the certificate when it served the notice on the California Attorney General’s
21 Office, as required. Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(d); Title 11 C.C.R. § 3102.

22 28. Thereafter, on January 13, 2023, plaintiff served a 60-Day Notice of Violation
23 (“**Notice**”), together with the certificate of merit, on EDELSTEIN, ECHOTAPE, the California
24 Attorney General’s Office, and the requisite public enforcement agencies, alleging, as a result of
25 DEFENDANTS’ sales of the PRODUCTS, consumers in the State of California were, and are, being
26 exposed to DINP through their reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS as intended without
27 first receiving a “clear and reasonable warning,” as required by Proposition 65.

1 29. After receiving plaintiff's Notice, no public enforcement agency has commenced and
2 is diligently prosecuting a cause of action against DEFENDANTS under Proposition 65 to enforce
3 the alleged violations that are the subject of the Notice.

4 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

5 **(Violation of Proposition 65 - Against All DEFENDANTS)**

6 30. KASB realleges and incorporates by reference, as if fully stated herein, the allegations
7 set forth in Paragraphs 1 through 29, inclusive.

8 31. DEFENDANTS' PRODUCTS contain DINP in levels requiring a clear and reasonable
9 warning under Proposition 65.

10 32. DEFENDANTS know or should have known the PRODUCTS they manufacture,
11 import, distribute, sell, and offer for sale in California contain DINP. As a result of plaintiff's Notice,
12 DEFENDANTS also have actual knowledge of the presence of DINP in the PRODUCTS.

13 33. The PRODUCTS DEFENDANTS manufacture, import, distribute, sell, and offer for
14 sale in or into the State of California cause exposures to DINP, both direct and/or indirect dermal
15 contact and ingestion, through the reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS.

16 34. The normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS has caused, and
17 continues to cause, exposures to DINP.

18 35. DEFENDANTS know the normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS
19 exposes individuals to DINP through direct and indirect dermal contact and/or ingestion.

20 36. DEFENDANTS intend that exposures to DINP from the reasonably foreseeable use of
21 the PRODUCTS will occur by their deliberate, non-accidental participation in the California
22 marketplace.

23 37. The exposures to DINP, caused by DEFENDANTS and endured by consumers and
24 other individuals in California, are not exempt from the "clear and reasonable" warning requirements
25 of Proposition 65.

26 38. DEFENDANTS failed to provide a "clear and reasonable warning" to those consumers
27 and other individuals in California who have been, or who will be, exposed to DINP through direct
28 and indirect dermal contact and/or ingestion resulting from the use of the PRODUCTS as intended.

1 39. Contrary to the express policy and statutory prohibition of Proposition 65, consumers
2 and other individuals, exposed to DINP through dermal contact and ingestion as a result of their use
3 of the PRODUCTS that DEFENDANTS sold without a “clear and reasonable” health hazard
4 warning, have suffered, and continue to suffer, irreparable harm for which they have no plain, speedy,
5 or adequate remedy at law.

6 40. DEFENDANTS manufacture, import, distribute, sell, and offer the PRODUCTS for
7 sale or use in violation of Health and Safety Code § 25249.6, and DEFENDANTS’ violations have
8 continued beyond their receipt of plaintiff’s Notice. As such, DEFENDANTS’ violations are
9 ongoing and continuous in nature and, unless enjoined, will continue in the future.

10 41. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(b), as a consequence of the above-
11 described acts, DEFENDANTS, and each of them, are liable for a maximum civil penalty of \$2,500
12 per day for each violation.

13 42. As a consequence of the above-described acts, Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(a)
14 also specifically authorizes the Court to grant injunctive relief against DEFENDANTS.

15 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

16 Wherefore, KASB prays for relief and judgment against DEFENDANTS, and each of them,
17 as follows:

18 1. That the Court, pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(a), preliminarily and
19 permanently enjoin DEFENDANTS from manufacturing, distributing, importing, marketing or
20 otherwise offering the PRODUCTS for sale or use in California without first providing a “clear and
21 reasonable warning” to consumers addressing the harms associated with exposures to DINP;

22 2. That the Court, pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(a), issue preliminary
23 and permanent injunctions mandating DEFENDANTS recall all PRODUCTS currently in the chain
24 of commerce in California that do not bear a clear and reasonable health hazard warning;

25 3. That the Court assess civil penalties against DEFENDANTS, and each of them, in the
26 amount of \$2,500 per day for each violation of Proposition 65, in an amount to be determined at trial;

27 4. That the Court award plaintiff its reasonable attorneys’ fees and costs of suit, incurred
28 herein; and


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5. That the Court grant any further relief as it deems just and equitable.

Dated: December 14, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

SEVEN HILLS LLP

By: 

Kimberly Gates Johnson
Attorneys for Plaintiff
Keep America Safe and Beautiful