

1 Evan J. Smith, Esquire (SBN 242352)
2 Ryan P. Cardona, Esquire (SBN 302113)
3 BRODSKY SMITH
4 9465 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 300
Beverly Hills, CA 90212
Telephone: (877) 534-2590
Facsimile: (310) 247-0160

5 *Attorneys for Plaintiff*

ELECTRONICALLY
FILED
Superior Court of California,
County of San Francisco

09/02/2025
Clerk of the Court
BY: KALENE APOLONIO
Deputy Clerk

6 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
7
8 COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

9 GABRIEL ESPINOZA,

10 Plaintiff,

11 vs.

12 THE KROGER CO.,

13 Defendant.

Case No.: CGC-24-612879

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

**(Violation of Health & Safety Code § 25249.5 et
seq.)**

14 Plaintiff Gabriel Espinoza ("Plaintiff"), by and through his attorneys, alleges the following
15 cause of action in the public interest of the citizens of the State of California.

16 **BACKGROUND OF THE CASE**

17 1. Plaintiff brings this representative action on behalf of all California citizens to
18 enforce relevant portions of Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, codified at
19 the Health and Safety Code § 25249.5 et seq ("Proposition 65"), which reads, in relevant part,
20 "[n]o person in the course of doing business shall knowingly and intentionally expose any
21 individual to a chemical known to the state to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without first
22 giving clear and reasonable warning to such individual ...". Health & Safety Code § 25249.6.

23 2. This first amended complaint is a representative action brought by Plaintiff in the
24 public interest of the citizens of the State of California to enforce the People's right to be informed
25 of the health hazards caused by exposure to lead, a toxic chemical found in (a) *Blue Diamond*
26 *Almonds*® almond nut thins rice cracker snacks, UPC # 041570054048 and (b) Bela sardines in
27 extra virgin oil with piri-piri and smoke flavor, UPC # 633600502331 sold and/or distributed by
28 defendant The Kroger Co. ("Kroger" or "Defendant") in California.

1 3. Lead is a harmful chemical known to the State of California to cause cancer and
2 birth defects or other reproductive harm. On October 1, 1992, the state of California listed lead as
3 a chemical known to cause cancer and it has come under the purview of Proposition 65 regulations
4 since that time. Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 27, § 27001(c); Health & Safety Code §§ 25249.8 &
5 25249.10(b). On February 27, 1987, the State of California listed lead as a chemical known to
6 cause birth defects or other reproductive harm.

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

13 5. Proposition 65 allows for civil penalties of up to \$2,500.00 per day per violation
14 for up to 365 days (up to a maximum civil penalty amount per violation of \$912,000.00) to be
15 imposed upon defendants in a civil action for violations of Proposition 65. Health & Safety Code
16 § 25249.7(b). Proposition 65 also allows for any court of competent jurisdiction to enjoin the
17 actions of a defendant which “violate or threaten to violate” the statute. Health & Safety Code §
18 25249.7.

19 6. Plaintiff alleges that Defendant distributes and/or offers for sale in California,
20 without a requisite exposure warning, (a) *Blue Diamond Almonds®* almond nut thins rice cracker
21 snacks, UPC # 041570054048 and (b) Bela sardines in extra virgin oil with piri-piri and smoke
22 flavor, UPC # 633600502331 (collectively, the “Products”) that expose persons to lead when used
23 for their intended purpose.

24 7. Defendant’s failure to warn consumers and other individuals in California of the
25 health hazards associated with exposure to lead in conjunction with the sale and/or distribution of
26 the Products is a violation of Proposition 65 and subjects Defendant to the enjoinder and civil
27 penalties described herein.

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

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

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

PARTIES

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

12. Defendant Kroger, 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 Kroger is a “person” in the course of doing business within the meaning of Health & Safety Code sections 25249.6 and 25249.11.

VENUE AND JURISDICTION

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

14. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to California Constitution Article VI, § 10, which grants the Superior Court original jurisdiction in all causes except those given by statute to other trial courts. Health and Safety Code § 25249.7 allows for the enforcement of violations of Proposition 65 in any Court of competent jurisdiction; therefore, this Court has jurisdiction over this lawsuit.

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

7 **STATUTORY BACKGROUND**

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

11 17. To effect this goal, Proposition 65 requires that individuals be provided with a
12 “clear and reasonable warning” before being exposed to substances listed by the State of California
13 as causing cancer and/or birth defects or other reproductive harm. H&S Code § 25249.6 states, in
14 pertinent part:

15 No person in the course of doing business shall knowingly and intentionally expose any
16 individual to a chemical known to the state to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without
 first giving clear and reasonable warning to such individual...

17 18. In this case, exposures are caused by consumer products. A “Consumer Product” is
18 defined as “any article, or component part thereof, including food, that is produced, distributed, or
19 sold for the personal use, consumption or enjoyment of a consumer.” (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 27, §
20 25600.1, subd. (d).) Food includes “dietary supplements” as defined in California Code of
21 Regulations, title 17, section 10200. (*Id.* at subd. (g).) An exposure to a chemical in a Consumer
22 Product is one “which results from a person’s acquisition, purchase, storage, consumption or other
23 reasonably foreseeable use of a consumer good, or any exposure that results from receiving a
24 consumer service.” (27 CCR § 25602, para (b).) H&S Code § 25603(c) states that “a person in the
25 course of doing business ... shall provide a warning to any person to whom the product is sold or
26 transferred unless the product is packaged or labeled with a clear and reasonable warning.”
27
28

19. 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:¹

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.

20. 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 to mean 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).

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

21. On October 1, 1992, the state of California listed lead as a chemical known to cause cancer and it 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). On February 27, 1987, the State of California listed lead as a chemical known to cause birth defects or other

¹ 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 reproductive harm. In summary, lead was listed under Proposition 65 as a chemical known to the
2 State to cause cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm.

3 22. The exposures that are the subject of the Notices result from the purchase,
4 acquisition, and recommended use of the Products. The primary route of exposure to lead is
5 through ingestion. When foods contaminated with lead are consumed, ingestion of lead will occur
6 which will increase blood lead levels. No clear and reasonable warning is provided with the
7 Products regarding the health hazards of exposure.

8 23. Defendant has processed, marketed, distributed, offered to sell and/or sold the
9 Products in California since at least March 7, 2023 with respect to the *Blue Diamond Almonds*®
10 almond nut thins rice cracker snacks, and since at least May 10, 2023 with respect to the Bela
11 sardines in extra virgin oil with piri-piri and smoke flavor. The Products continue to be distributed
12 and sold in California without the requisite warning information.

13 24. At all times relevant to this action, Defendant has knowingly and intentionally
14 exposed users and/or consumers of the Products to lead without first giving a clear and reasonable
15 exposure warning to such individuals.

16 25. As a proximate result of acts by Defendant, as a person in the course of doing
17 business within the meaning of H&S Code § 25249.11, individuals throughout the State of
18 California, including in San Francisco County, have been exposed to lead without a clear and
19 reasonable warning on the Products. The individuals subject to the violative exposures include
20 normal and foreseeable users and consumers that use the Products, as well as all others exposed to
21 the Products.

22 **SATISFACTION OF NOTICE REQUIREMENTS**

23 26. Plaintiff purchased the Products from Kroger. At the time of purchase, Defendant
24 did not provide a Proposition 65 exposure warning for lead or any other Proposition 65 listed
25 chemical in a manner consistent with H&S Code § 25603.1 as described *supra*.

26 27. The Products were sent to a testing laboratory to determine if, and what amount of,
27 lead a consumer would be exposed to per serving size.

1 28. The laboratory provided the results of its analysis. Results of these tests determined
2 the Products expose users to lead (collectively, the “Chemical Test Reports” and each a “Chemical
3 Test Report”).

4 29. Plaintiff provided the Chemical Test Reports and Products to an analytical chemist
5 to determine if, based on the findings of the Chemical Test Reports and the reasonable and
6 foreseeable use of the Products, exposure to lead will occur at levels that require Proposition 65
7 warnings under the Clear and Reasonable Warnings section 25601 of Title 27 of the California
8 Code of Regulations.

9 30. On March 7, 2023, Plaintiff received from the analytical chemist an exposure
10 assessment report which concluded that persons in California who use the *Blue Diamond*
11 *Almonds*® almond nut thins rice cracker snacks will be exposed to levels of lead that require a
12 Proposition 65 exposure warning. On May 10, 2023, Plaintiff received from the analytical chemist
13 an exposure assessment report which concluded that persons in California who use the Bela
14 sardines in extra virgin oil with piri-piri and smoke flavor will be exposed to levels of lead that
15 require a Proposition 65 exposure warning.

16 31. On March 7, 2023 (*Blue Diamond Almonds*® almond nut thins rice cracker snacks)
17 and May 10, 2023 (Bela sardines in extra virgin oil with piri-piri and smoke flavor), Plaintiff gave
18 notice of alleged violation of Health and Safety Code § 25249.6 (collectively, the “Notices” and
19 each a “Notice”) to Defendant concerning the exposure of California citizens to lead contained in
20 the Products without proper warning, subject to a private action to Defendant and to the California
21 Attorney General’s office and the offices of the County District attorneys and City Attorneys for
22 each city with a population greater than 750,000 persons wherein the herein violations allegedly
23 occurred. See attached at Exhibits “A” – “B” a true and correct copy of each Notice.

24 32. The Notices complied with all procedural requirements of Proposition 65 including
25 the attachment of a Certificate of Merit affirming that Plaintiff’s counsel had consulted with at
26 least one person with relevant and appropriate expertise who reviewed relevant data regarding lead
27 exposure, and that counsel believed there was meritorious and reasonable cause for a private
28 action.

1 41. Plaintiff, based on his best information and belief, avers that such exposures will
2 continue every day until clear and reasonable warnings are provided to purchasers and users or
3 until this known toxic chemical is removed from the Products.

4 42. Defendant has knowledge that the normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the
5 Products exposes individuals to lead, and Defendant intends that exposures to lead will occur by
6 its deliberate, non-accidental participation in the importation, distribution, sale and offering of the
7 Products to consumers in California

8 43. Plaintiff has engaged in good faith efforts to resolve the herein claims prior to this
9 Complaint.

10 44. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(b), as a consequence of the above
11 described acts, Defendant is liable for a maximum civil penalty of \$2,500 per day per violation.

12 45. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(a), this Court is specifically
13 authorized to grant injunctive relief in favor of Plaintiff and against Defendant.

1 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

2 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendant and requests the following
3 relief:

4 A. That the court assess civil penalties against Defendant in the amount of \$2,500 per
5 day for each violation for up to 365 days (up to a maximum civil penalty amount per
6 violation of \$912,000.00) in accordance with Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(b);

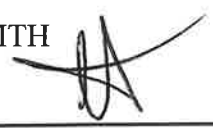
7 B. That the court preliminarily and permanently enjoin Defendant mandating
8 Proposition 65 compliant warnings on the Products;

9 C. That the court grant Plaintiff reasonable attorney's fees and costs of suit, in the
10 amount of \$50,000.00.

11 D. That the court grant any further relief as may be just and proper.

12 Dated: September 2, 2025

BRODSKY SMITH

13 By: 

14 Evan J. Smith (SBN242352)

15 Ryan P. Cardona (SBN302113)

16 9465 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 300

17 Beverly Hills, CA 90212

18 Telephone: (877) 534-2590

19 Facsimile: (310) 247-0160

20 *Attorneys for Plaintiff*

EXHIBIT “A”

LAW OFFICES
BRODSKY & SMITH, LLC

9595 WILSHIRE BLVD., STE. 900
BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90212
877.534.2590
www.brodskysmith.com

NEW JERSEY OFFICE
1310 NORTH KINGS HIGHWAY
CHERRY HILL, NJ 08934
856.795.7250

NEW YORK OFFICE
240 MINEOLA BOULEVARD
MINEOLA, NY 11501
516.741.4977

PENNSYLVANIA OFFICE
TWO BALA PLAZA, STE. 805
BALA CYNWYD, PA 19004
610.667.6200

March 7, 2023

CEO/GM/Board of Directors Blue Diamond Growers c/o CT Corporation System 28 Liberty Street New York, NY 10005	President/CEO Blue Diamond Almond Growers c/o CT Corporation System 28 Liberty Street New York, NY 10005
CEO/GM/Board of Directors Blue Diamond Growers 1802 C Street Sacramento, CA 95811	President/CEO Blue Diamond Almond Growers 1802 C Street Sacramento, CA 95811
President/CEO California Almond Growers Exchange c/o CT Corporation System 28 Liberty Street New York, NY 10005	President/CEO California Almond Growers Exchange 3900 E. Camelback Road, Suite 300 Att: Legal Department Phoenix, AZ 85018
CEO/GM/Board of Directors Blue Diamond Growers PO Box 1766 Sacramento, CA 95812-1768	President/CEO The Kroger Co. c/o Corporation Service Company 3366 Riverside Drive, Suite 103 Upper Arlington, OH 43221
President/CEO The Kroger Co. dba Ralphs c/o Corporation Service Company 3366 Riverside Drive, Suite 103 Upper Arlington, OH 43221	President/CEO The Kroger Co. c/o Corporation Service Company Which Will Do Business In California As CSC – Lawyers Incorporating Service 2710 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 150N Sacramento, CA 95833

60-Day Notice of Violation of California Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act¹

To Whom It May Concern:

This Notice of Violation (the “Notice”) is provided to you pursuant to and in compliance with California Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(d).

Brodsky & Smith, LLC (“Brodsky Smith”) represents Gabriel Espinoza (“Espinoza”), a citizen of the State of California acting in the interest of the general public to promote awareness of exposures to toxic chemicals from use of consumer products sold in California and to improve human health and the environment by reducing hazardous substances.

¹ The public enforcement agencies that have been served with copies of this Notice are identified in the attached distribution list accompanying the Certificate of Service.

With respect to the Product herein, Espinoza has identified a violation of California's Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 ("Proposition 65") codified at Cal. Health & Safety Code § 25249.5, et seq. This violation has occurred and continues to occur because the alleged Violator(s) failed to provide a clear and reasonable health hazard warning in connection with the sale or use of the Product in California. Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 provides that "[n]o person in the course of doing business shall knowingly and intentionally expose any individual to a chemical known to the State to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without first providing a clear and reasonable warning to such individual ...". Without proper warnings regarding the toxic effects of exposures to the Listed Chemical resulting from use of the Product, California citizens lack the information necessary to make informed decisions on whether and/or how to eliminate (or reduce) the risk of exposure to the Listed Chemical from the reasonably foreseeable use of the Product.

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE VIOLATION

1. **Enforcer:** Gabriel Espinoza, 3924 Carlin Ave., Lynwood, CA 90262-5204; (Ph) 310.863.2852.
2. **Alleged Violator(s):** Blue Diamond Growers; Blue Diamond Almond Growers; California Almond Growers Exchange; The Kroger Co.; The Kroger Co. dba Ralphs
3. **Time Period of Exposure:** Violations have been occurring since at least March 7, 2023 and are continuing to this day.
4. **Listed Chemical:** Lead. Lead is listed under Proposition 65 as a chemical known to the State to cause cancer and reproductive toxicity.
5. **Product:**

Product ²	Non- Exclusive Examples of the Product
Rice Cracker Snacks	Blue Diamond Almonds Almond Nut Thins Rice Cracker Snacks UPC#041570054048

6. **Description of Exposure:** The exposures that are the subject of this Notice result from the purchase and recommended use of the Product. The primary route of exposure to the Listed Chemical is through ingestion. When foods contaminated with the Listed Chemical are consumed, ingestion of the Listed Chemical will occur which will increase BLLs. No clear and reasonable warning is provided with the Products regarding the health hazards of exposure to the Listed Chemical.

II. PROPOSITION 65 INFORMATION

² The specifically identified example of the Product in this Notice is to assist the recipients' investigation of, among other things, the magnitude of potential exposures to the Listed Chemical from other items within the definition of Products. This example is not intended to be an exhaustive or comprehensive identification of each specific offending Product. It is Espinoza's position that the alleged Violators are obligated to conduct a good faith investigation into other Products that may have been manufactured, distributed, sold, shipped, stored (or otherwise within the alleged Violators' custody or control) during the relevant period to ensure that requisite health hazard warnings were and are provided to California citizens prior to purchase and use.

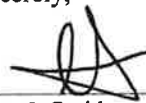
For the Violators' reference, enclosed is a copy of "Proposition 65: A Summary" that has been prepared by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment ("OEHHA"). For more information concerning the provisions of Proposition 65, contact OEHHA at 916.445.6900.

III. RESOLUTION OF THE CLAIMS

Based on the allegations set forth in this Notice, Brodsky Smith intends to file a citizen enforcement lawsuit on behalf of Espinoza against the alleged Violator(s) unless such Violator(s) agree in a binding written agreement to: (1) recall Products already sold; (2) provide Proposition 65 compliant exposure warnings for Products sold in the future or reformulate the Products to eliminate exposures to the Listed Chemical; and (3) pay an appropriate civil penalty based on the factors enumerated in Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(b). Consistent with the public interest goals of Proposition 65 and the desire to have these violations of California law quickly rectified, Espinoza is interested in seeking a constructive resolution of the claims in this Notice without engaging in costly and protracted litigation.

Espinoza has retained me as legal counsel in connection with this Notice. **Please direct all communications regarding this Notice to my attention at Brodsky & Smith, LLC, 9595 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 900, Beverly Hills, CA 90212, (877) 534-2590, esmith@brodskysmith.com.**

Sincerely,



Evan J. Smith

Attachments

Certificate of Merit

Certificate of Service

The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (Proposition 65): A Summary

EXHIBIT “B”

LAW OFFICES
BRODSKY & SMITH, LLC

9595 WILSHIRE BLVD., STE. 900
BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90212
877.534.2590
www.brodskysmith.com

NEW JERSEY OFFICE
1310 NORTH KINGS HIGHWAY
CHERRY HILL, NJ 08934
856.795.7250

NEW YORK OFFICE
240 MINEOLA BOULEVARD
MINEOLA, NY 11501
516.741.4977

PENNSYLVANIA OFFICE
TWO BALA PLAZA, STE. 805
BALA CYNWYD, PA 19004
610.667.6200

May 10, 2023

Member/Manager Purse Seine Holdings LLC c/o Joshua Scherz 14 Arrow St., Suite 20 Cambridge, MA 02138	Member/Manager Purse Seine Holdings LLC 328 Old Connecticut Path Wayland, MA 01778
President/CEO The Kroger Co. c/o Corporation Service Company 3366 Riverside Drive, Suite 103 Upper Arlington, OH 43221	President/CEO The Kroger Co. dba Ralphs c/o Corporation Service Company 3366 Riverside Drive, Suite 103 Upper Arlington, OH 43221
President/CEO The Kroger Co. c/o Corporation Service Company Which Will Do Business In California As CSC-Lawyers Incorporating Service 2710 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 150N Sacramento, CA 95833	

60-Day Notice of Violation of California Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act¹

To Whom It May Concern:

This Notice of Violation (the "Notice") is provided to you pursuant to and in compliance with California Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(d).

Brodsky & Smith, LLC ("Brodsky Smith") represents Gabriel Espinoza ("Espinoza"), a citizen of the State of California acting in the interest of the general public to promote awareness of exposures to toxic chemicals from use of consumer products sold in California and to improve human health and the environment by reducing hazardous substances.

With respect to the Product herein, Espinoza has identified a violation of California's Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 ("Proposition 65") codified at Cal. Health & Safety Code § 25249.5, et seq. This violation has occurred and continues to occur because the alleged Violator(s) failed to provide a clear and reasonable health hazard warning in connection with the sale or use of the Product in California. Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 provides that "[n]o person in the course of doing business shall knowingly and intentionally expose any individual to a chemical known to the State to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without first providing a clear and reasonable warning to such individual ..." Without proper warnings regarding the toxic effects of exposures to the Listed Chemical resulting from use of the Product, California citizens lack the information necessary to make informed decisions on

¹ The public enforcement agencies that have been served with copies of this Notice are identified in the attached distribution list accompanying the Certificate of Service.

whether and/or how to eliminate (or reduce) the risk of exposure to the Listed Chemical from the reasonably foreseeable use of the Product.

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE VIOLATION

1. **Enforcer:** Gabriel Espinoza, 3924 Carlin Ave., Lynwood, CA 90262-5204; (Ph) 310.863.2852.
2. **Alleged Violator(s):** Purse Seine Holdings LLC; The Kroger Co.; The Kroger Co. dba Ralphs
3. **Time Period of Exposure:** Violations have been occurring since at least May 10, 2023 and are continuing to this day.
4. **Listed Chemical:** Lead. Lead is listed under Proposition 65 as a chemical known to the State to cause cancer and reproductive toxicity.
5. **Product:**

Product ²	Non- Exclusive Examples of the Product
Sardines	Bela Sardines in Extra Virgin Oil with Piri-Piri and Smoke Flavor UPC# 633600502331

6. **Description of Exposure:** The exposures that are the subject of this Notice result from the purchase and recommended use of the Product. The primary route of exposure to the Listed Chemical is through ingestion. When foods contaminated with the Listed Chemical are consumed, ingestion of the Listed Chemical will occur which will increase BLLs. No clear and reasonable warning is provided with the Products regarding the health hazards of exposure to the Listed Chemical.

II. PROPOSITION 65 INFORMATION

For the Violators' reference, enclosed is a copy of "Proposition 65: A Summary" that has been prepared by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment ("OEHHA"). For more information concerning the provisions of Proposition 65, contact OEHHA at 916.445.6900.

III. RESOLUTION OF THE CLAIMS

Based on the allegations set forth in this Notice, Brodsky Smith intends to file a citizen enforcement lawsuit on behalf of Espinoza against the alleged Violator(s) unless such Violator(s) agree in a binding written agreement to: (1) recall Products already sold; (2) provide Proposition 65 compliant exposure warnings for Products sold in the future or reformulate the Products to eliminate exposures to the Listed Chemical; and (3) pay an appropriate civil penalty based on the factors enumerated in Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(b). Consistent with the public interest goals of Proposition 65 and the desire to have

² The specifically identified example of the Product in this Notice is to assist the recipients' investigation of, among other things, the magnitude of potential exposures to the Listed Chemical from other items within the definition of Products. This example is not intended to be an exhaustive or comprehensive identification of each specific offending Product. It is Espinoza's position that the alleged Violators are obligated to conduct a good faith investigation into other Products that may have been manufactured, distributed, sold, shipped, stored (or otherwise within the alleged Violators' custody or control) during the relevant period to ensure that requisite health hazard warnings were and are provided to California citizens prior to purchase and use.

these violations of California law quickly rectified, Espinoza is interested in seeking a constructive resolution of the claims in this Notice without engaging in costly and protracted litigation.

Espinoza has retained me as legal counsel in connection with this Notice. **Please direct all communications regarding this Notice to my attention at Brodsky & Smith, LLC, 9595 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 900, Beverly Hills, CA 90212, (877) 534-2590, esmith@brodskysmith.com.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Evan J. Smith", written over a horizontal line.

Evan J. Smith

Attachments

Certificate of Merit

Certificate of Service

The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Action of 1986 (Proposition 65): A Summary