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14 Environmental Health Advocates, Inc.

15 **SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

16 **IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF ALAMEDA**

17 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATES,
18 INC.,

19 Plaintiff,

20 v.

21 I WON NUTRITION, CO., a Delaware
22 corporation; SPROUTS FARMERS MARKET,
23 INC., a Delaware corporation; and DOES 1
24 through 100, inclusive,

25 Defendants.

Case No.: **24CV066854**

**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES
AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

(Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 et seq.)

ELECTRONICALLY FILED

Superior Court of California,
County of Alameda

03/07/2024 at 04:00:24 PM

By: Milagros Cortez,
Deputy Clerk

I.
INTRODUCTION

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2 1. This Complaint is a representative action brought by Environmental Health Advocates,
3 Inc. (“Plaintiff”) in the public interest of the citizens of the State of California (“the People”). Plaintiff
4 seeks to remedy Defendants' failure to inform the People of exposure to mercury, a known reproductive
5 toxin. Defendants expose consumers to mercury by manufacturing, importing, selling, and/or
6 distributing protein snack including, but not limited to, I Won Organics Mesquite BBQ Protein Stix
7 (“Products”). Defendants know and intend that customers will ingest Products containing mercury.

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

13 3. California identified and listed mercury as a chemical known to cause reproductive
14 toxicity as early as July 1, 1990.

15 4. Defendants failed to sufficiently warn consumers and individuals in California about
16 potential exposure to mercury in connection with Defendants' manufacture, import, sale, or distribution
17 of Products. This is a violation of Proposition 65.

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

II.
PARTIES

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23 6. Plaintiff ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATES, INC. (“Plaintiff”) is a
24 corporation in the State of California dedicated to protecting the health of California citizens through
25 the elimination or reduction of toxic exposure from consumer products. It brings this action in the public
26 interest pursuant to Health and Safety Code, section 25249.7.

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

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

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

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

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1 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

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

- 3 1. Civil penalties in the amount of \$2,500 per day for each violation. Plaintiff alleges that
4 damages total a minimum of \$1,000,000;
- 5 2. A preliminary and permanent injunction against Defendants from manufacturing,
6 importing, selling, and/or distributing Products in California without providing a clear and reasonable
7 warning as required by Proposition 65 and related Regulations;
- 8 3. Reasonable attorney’s fees and costs of suit; and
- 9 4. Such other and further relief as may be just and proper.
- 10

11 Respectfully submitted:

12 Dated: March 7, 2024

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13
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