1 2 3 4 5	GREENBAUM LAW FIRM Daniel N. Greenbaum, Esq. (SBN 268104) Thomas G. Adams, Esq., Of Counsel (SBN 2707120 Hayvenhurst Ave., Suite 320 Van Nuys CA 91406 Telephone: (818) 809-2199 Facsimile: (424) 243-7689 Email: dgreenbaum@greenbaumlawfirm.com	808)	Electronically FILED by Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles 9/25/2024 11:32 AM David W. Slayton, Executive Officer/Clerk of Court, By Y. Ayala, Deputy Clerk
6 7 8	Attorneys for Plaintiff, MOTHERS OVERSIGHT NETWORK FOR A CONTAMINANT HARM [MONARCH], LLC		
9	SUPERIOR COURT OF 3	THE STATE OF CA	LIFORNIA
10	COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES – CENTRAL		
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12	MOTHERS OVERSIGHT NETWORK FOR ACTIONABLE CONTAMINANT HARM	) Unlimited Jurisdic	ction
13	[MONARCH], LLC,	) CASE NO. <b>24</b> 5	STCV24842
14	Plaintiff,	,	OR CIVIL PENALTY
15	VS.	) AND INJUNCTI )	VE RELIEF
16	HOBBY LOBBY, and DOES 1 through 100,	) (Health & Safety (	Code § 25249.6 et seq.)
17	Inclusive,	)	
18	Defendants.	)	
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	COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF		

#### I. PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

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1. This complaint seeks to remedy the failure of Defendants to warn persons of exposure to Di (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate ("DEHP"), a chemical known to the State of California to cause

2. Under the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 (also known as "Proposition 65") businesses must provide persons with a "clear and reasonable warning" before exposing individuals to chemicals known to the state to cause cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm.

3. Plaintiff alleges a violation of Proposition 65 in products sold by Defendants without first giving clear and reasonable warning.

#### II. **PARTIES**

- 4. Plaintiff. Mothers Oversight Network for Actionable Contaminant Harm [MONARCH], LLC ("MONARCH"), is a limited liability company formed pursuant to the laws of the State of California, made up of a California citizen, represented by and through its counsel of record, the Greenbaum Law Firm. PLAINTIFF sues herein as MONARCH which name is incorporated in its name under the articles of incorporation, as stated above.
- 5. Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(d) provides that actions to enforce Proposition 65 may be brought by "any person in the public interest."
- 6. Defendant Hobby Lobby is a business entity with ten or more employees that sells, or has, at times relevant to this complaint, authorized the manufacture, distribution, or sale of clear pouch products manufactured by or for Defendant, imported by or for Defendant, or distributed or sold by or for Defendant, including, but not limited to, Hobby Lobby Clear Pouch - 2331569, that contains DEHP, for sale within the State of California, without first giving clear and reasonable warning.

- 7. The identities of DOES 1 through 100 are unknown to Plaintiff at this time; however, Plaintiff suspects they are business entities with at least ten or more employees that at all times relevant to this complaint, authorized the manufacture, distribution, or sale of clear pouch products manufactured by or for Defendant, imported by or for Defendant, or distributed or sold by or for Defendant, including, but not limited to, Hobby Lobby Clear Pouch 2331569, that contains DEHP, for sale within the State of California, without first giving clear and reasonable warning.
- 8. Defendants named in paragraphs 6 through 7 have at all times relevant to this complaint, authorized the manufacture, distribution, or sale of clear pouch products manufactured by or for Defendant, imported by or for Defendant, or distributed or sold by or for Defendant, including, but not limited to, Hobby Lobby Clear Pouch 2331569, that contains DEHP (hereinafter "PRODUCT"), for sale within the State of California, without first giving clear and reasonable warning.

### III. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 9. This Court has jurisdiction pursuant to California Constitution Article VI, section 10, because this case is a cause not given by statute to other trial courts.
- 10. This Court has jurisdiction over Defendants, because they are business entities that do sufficient business, have sufficient minimum contacts in California, or otherwise intentionally avail themselves of the California market, through the sale, marketing, and use of its products in California, to render the exercise of jurisdiction over it by the California courts consistent with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.
- 11. Venue is proper in this Court because the cause, or part thereof, arises in Los Angeles County because Defendant's products are sold and consumed in this county.

### IV. STATUTORY BACKGROUND

- 12. The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 is an initiative statute passed as "Proposition 65" by a vote of the people in November of 1986.
- 13. The warning requirement of Proposition 65 is contained in Health & Safety Code § 25249.6, which provides:

No person in the course of doing business shall knowingly and intentionally expose any individual to a chemical known to the state to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable warning to such individual, except as provided in Section 25249.10.

- 14. An exposure to a chemical in a consumer product is one "which results from a person's acquisition, purchase, storage, consumption, or other reasonably foreseeable use of a consumer good, or any exposure that results from receiving a consumer service." (27 CCR 25602(b))
- 15. Proposition 65 establishes a procedure by which the State develops a list of chemicals "known to the State to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity." (Health & Safety Code § 25249.8.)
- 16. No warning need be given concerning a listed chemical until one year after the chemical first appears on the list. (Health & Safety Code § 25249.10(b).)
- 17. Any person "violating or threatening to violate" the statute may be enjoined in any court of competent jurisdiction. (Health & Safety Code, § 25249.7.)
- 18. To "threaten to violate" is defined to mean "to create a condition in which there is a substantial probability that a violation will occur." (Health & Safety Code § 25249.11(e).)
- 19. In addition, violators are liable for civil penalties of up to \$2,500 per day for each violation, recoverable in a civil action. (Health & Safety Code § 25249.7 (b).)
- 20. Actions to enforce the law "may be brought by the Attorney General in the name of the People of the State of California [or] by any district attorney [or] by any City Attorney of a City having a population in excess of 750,000 . . ." (Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(c).)
- 21. Private parties are given authority to enforce Proposition 65 "in the public interest," but only if the private party first provides written notice of a violation to the alleged violator, the Attorney General, and every District Attorney in whose jurisdiction the alleged violation occurs.
- 22. If no public prosecutors commence enforcement within sixty days, then the private party may sue. (Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(d).)

### V. FACTS

23. DEHP was placed on the Governor's list of chemicals known to the State to cause reproductive toxicity on October 24, 2003. (27 CCR 27001(b))

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- 24. Plaintiff purchased the PRODUCT from Hobby Lobby on or about September 25, 2023.
- 25. The PRODUCT itself did not contain or present a Proposition 65 warning label.
- 26. On or about February 19, 2024, Plaintiff's expert prepared a report summarizing the results of analysis on the PRODUCT, including the amount of the DEHP in the PRODUCT.
- 27. Based on the levels, Plaintiff's expert opined that use of the PRODUCT would lead to exposure to DEHP above the safe harbor levels set by the Office of Environment Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA).
- 28. Based on that report and opinion, and lack of warning labels on the PRODUCT, Plaintiff and its counsel prepared a Sixty Notice of Violation.
- 29. Pursuant to the statute and regulations referenced above, on February 29, 2024, Plaintiff served a Notice of Violation on the Office of the Attorney General and Defendant, and all required public agencies.
  - 30. Plaintiff is unaware of any governmental prosecution against Defendant.
  - 31. At least sixty (60) days have elapsed since service of all Notices of Violation.
- 32. Based upon consultation with experts, Plaintiff alleges that individuals who purchase, handle, or use the PRODUCT are exposed to DEHP chiefly through:
  - a. contact between the item and the skin;
- b. transfer of DEHP from the skin to the mouth, both by transfer of DEHP directly from the hand to mouth, and indirectly by transfer of DEHP from the skin to objects that are placed in the mouth, such as food; and
  - c. through absorption of DEHP through the skin.
- 33. Such individuals are thereby exposed to the DEHP that is present on or in the PRODUCT during the intended and reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCT.
- 34. At all times material to this complaint, Defendants have had knowledge that the PRODUCT contains DEHP and that an individual's skin may contact DEHP through the intended and reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCT.
- 35. At all times material to this complaint, Defendant has had knowledge that individuals within the State of California handle the PRODUCT, which contains DEHP.

- 36. At all times material to this complaint, Defendants knew that the PRODUCT was sold throughout the State of California, and Defendants profited from such sales.
- 37. Notwithstanding this knowledge, Defendants intentionally authorized and reauthorized the sale of the PRODUCT, thereby exposing consumers to DEHP.
- 38. At all times material to this complaint, therefore, Defendants have knowingly and intentionally exposed individuals within the State of California to DEHP.
- 39. The exposure is knowing and intentional because it is the result of the Defendant's deliberate act of authorizing the sale of products known to contain DEHP, in a manner whereby these products were, and would inevitably be, sold to consumers within the state of California, and with the knowledge that the intended use of this PRODUCT would result in exposures to DEHP by individuals within the State of California.
- 40. Defendants have failed to provide clear and reasonable warnings that the use of the PRODUCT in question in California results in exposure to a chemical known to the State of California to cause cancer, birth defects, and other reproductive harm, and no such warning was provided to those individuals by any other person.

# VI. FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

# (Against All Defendants for Violation of Proposition 65)

- 41. Plaintiff incorporates and re-alleges by reference all the foregoing paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.
- 42. By committing the acts alleged above, Defendants have, in the course of doing business, knowingly and intentionally exposed individuals in California to chemicals known to the State of California to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable warning to such individuals, within the meaning of Health & Safety Code § 25249.6.
- 43. Said violations render Defendants liable to Plaintiffs for civil penalties not to exceed \$2,500 per day for each violation, as well as other remedies.

# PRAYER FOR RELIEF