

Laralei Paras, SBN 203319
Brian Johnson, SBN 235965
SEVEN HILLS LLP
4 Embarcadero Center, Suite 1400
San Francisco, CA 94111
Telephone: (415) 926-7247
laralei@sevenhillslp.com
brian@sevenhillslp.com

Attorneys for Plaintiff
KEEP AMERICA SAFE AND BEAUTIFUL

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

KEEP AMERICA SAFE AND BEAUTIFUL,

Plaintiff,

v.

FARMHOUSE POTTERY, INC.; and DOES
1-30, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No. 25CV458389

**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES
AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

Violations of Health & Safety Code
§ 25249.5, *et seq.* (Proposition 65)

Plaintiff KEEP AMERICA SAFE AND BEAUTIFUL (“KASB” or “Plaintiff”), acting in the public interest, alleges a cause of action against defendant FARMHOUSE POTTERY, INC., and DOES 1-30 (“Defendant”) for their alleged violations of Health & Safety Code § 25249.6, *et seq.*, as follows:

INTRODUCTION AND NATURE OF THE ACTION

1. KASB brings this representative action in the public interest on behalf of the citizens of the State of California. By this action, KASB seeks to enforce the People’s right to be informed of the health hazards caused by exposures to Lead, a heavy metal found in and on Nutcrackers with Brass Components manufactured, imported, distributed, sold and offered for sale by Defendant in the State of California.

2. By this Complaint, plaintiff seeks to remedy Defendants’ failure to warn individuals not covered by California’s Occupational Safety Health Act, Labor Code § 6300 *et seq.* (“consumers”)

1 exposed to substances known to cause birth defects or other reproductive harm through exposures to
2 Lead when they purchase, use and handle Defendants' Nutcrackers with Brass Components.

3 3. Detectable levels of Lead are found in and on the Nutcrackers with Brass Components
4 Defendants manufacture, import, sell and distribute for sale in California.

5 4. Pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, codified at
6 Health and Safety Code § 25249.6 *et seq.* ("Proposition 65"), it is unlawful for a person in the course
7 of doing business to knowingly and intentionally expose consumers and end-users in California to
8 chemicals known to the State to cause cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm, without first
9 providing a "clear and reasonable warning" regarding the presence of these chemicals in Defendants'
10 products and the harms associated with exposures to such chemicals.

11 5. Defendants manufacture, distribute, import, sell, and offer for sale, in and into
12 California Nutcrackers with Brass Components ("PRODUCTS") containing Lead, without providing
13 a warning regarding the presence of and the harms associated with exposures to Lead in Defendants'
14 PRODUCTS. Such PRODUCTS include, without limitation, the *Crafted Wooden Nutcracker*.
15 Defendants' violations subject them to civil penalties, injunction, preliminary and permanent
16 injunctive relief. Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(a) and (b).

17 **PARTIES**

18 6. KASB is a non-profit corporation organized under the laws of California and acting in
19 the public interest to reduce the presence of toxic chemicals found in consumer products and to
20 enforce California citizens' right to be informed about the presence of toxic chemicals in the products
21 they purchase and use and the harms associated with exposures to such chemicals. KASB is a
22 "person" within the meaning of Health & Safety Code § 25249.11(a). It brings this action in the
23 public interest, pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(d).

24 7. At all relevant times, defendant FARMHOUSE POTTERY, INC. ("FARMHOUSE
25 POTTERY") operates as a "person in the course of doing business" with ten (10) or more employees
26 within the meaning of and as defined by Health and Safety Code §§ 25249.6 and 25249.11.

27 8. FARMHOUSE POTTERY manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, and offers the
28 PRODUCTS for sale or use in California, or implies by its conduct that it manufactures, imports,

1 distributes, sells, and/or offers the PRODUCTS for sale or use to consumers and other individuals in
2 California.

3 9. Doe Defendants 1-10 (“MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS”) are each a “person in the
4 course of doing business” within the meaning of and as defined by Health and Safety Code
5 §§ 25249.6 and 25249.11. MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS, and each of them, assemble,
6 fabricate, and manufacture, or they each imply by their conduct they do so for one or more of the
7 PRODUCTS sold and/or offered for sale or use to consumers and other individuals in California.

8 10. Doe Defendants 11-20 (“DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS”) are each a person in the
9 course of doing business within the meaning of Health and Safety Code §§ 25249.6 and 25249.11.
10 DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS, and each of them, distribute, transfer, and transport the
11 PRODUCTS sold and offered for sale to consumers and other individuals in California, or they each
12 imply by their conduct they distribute, transfer, and transport one or more of the PRODUCTS to
13 individuals, businesses, and retailers for sale or use in California.

14 11. Doe Defendants 21-30 (“RETAILER DEFENDANTS”) are each a person in the course
15 of doing business within the meaning of and as defined by Health and Safety Code §§ 25249.6 and
16 25249.11. RETAILER DEFENDANTS, and each of them, offer the PRODUCTS for sale to
17 consumers and other individuals in California.

18 12. At this time, the true names of Defendants DOES 1 through 30, inclusive, are unknown
19 to KASB, who therefore, sues these Doe Defendants by their fictitious names, pursuant to Code of
20 Civil Procedure § 474. Each of the fictitiously named Defendants is responsible in some manner for
21 the acts and occurrences alleged herein and the violations and harms caused thereby. When
22 ascertained, KASB will identify these Doe Defendants by their true names in an amendment to this
23 Complaint.

24 13. FARMHOUSE POTTERY, MANUFACTURER DEFENDANTS, DISTRIBUTOR
25 DEFENDANTS, and RETAILER DEFENDANTS shall be referred to collectively herein as the
26 “DEFENDANTS.”
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1 exposing consumers to hazardous chemicals without first giving a “clear and reasonable warning.”
2 Health & Safety Code § 25249.6.

3 19. Exposing consumers to hazardous chemicals means to cause consumers to ingest, inhale,
4 contact via body surfaces or otherwise come into contact with a listed chemical. California Code of
5 Regulations (“Cal. Code Regs.”) Title 27, § 25102(i). An exposure to a hazardous chemical is
6 defined as one that “results from a person’s acquisition, purchase, storage, consumption or other
7 reasonably foreseeable use of a product...” Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 27, § 25600(h).

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

11 21. On February 27, 1987, pursuant to Proposition 65 implementing regulations, California
12 listed Lead as a chemical known to cause birth defects or other reproductive harm. Lead became
13 subject to the “clear and reasonable warning” requirements one year later, on February 27, 1988. Cal.
14 Code Regs. Tit. 27, § 27001(c); Health & Safety Code §§ 25249.8, 25249.10(b).

15 22. On October 1, 1992, pursuant to Proposition 65 implementing regulations, California
16 listed Lead as a chemical known to cause cancer. Lead became subject to the “clear and reasonable
17 warning” requirements one year later, on October 1, 1993. Cal. Code Regs. tit. 27, § 27001(c);
18 Health & Safety Code §§ 25249.8, 25249.10(b).

19 **STATEMENT OF FACTS**

20 23. DEFENDANTS sell and offer their PRODUCTS for sale in California without a clear
21 and reasonable warning in violation of Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 27, § 25600, *et seq.*

22 24. DEFENDANTS’ PRODUCTS expose consumers and end-users in California to Lead at
23 levels requiring a warning under Proposition 65 when they touch, handle or otherwise contact the
24 PRODUCTS during reasonably foreseeable and intended use.

25 25. On September 23, 2024, KASB served a 60-Day Notice of Violation (“Notice”),
26 together with the required certificate of merit, on FARMHOUSE POTTERY, the Office of the
27 Attorney General, and all requisite public enforcement agencies, alleging, as a result of
28 DEFENDANTS’ sales of the PRODUCTS, consumers and end-users in California were, and are,

1 exposed to Lead without first receiving the “clear and reasonable warning” required by Proposition
2 65.

3 26. After receiving plaintiff’s Notice, no public enforcement agency has commenced or is
4 diligently prosecuting a cause of action against DEFENDANTS to enforce the alleged violations of
5 Proposition 65 that are the subject of the Notices.

6 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

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

8 27. KASB realleges and incorporates by reference, as if fully stated herein, the allegations
9 set forth in Paragraphs 1 through 26, inclusive.

10 28. DEFENDANTS’ PRODUCTS contain Lead in levels requiring a clear and reasonable
11 warning under Proposition 65.

12 29. DEFENDANTS know or should have known their PRODUCTS contain Lead. As a
13 result of plaintiff’s Notices, DEFENDANTS now possess actual knowledge of the presence of Lead
14 in their PRODUCTS.

15 30. DEFENDANTS’ PRODUCTS expose consumers, end-users, and other individuals in
16 California to Lead through dermal contact and ingestion during the reasonably foreseeable and
17 intended use of the PRODUCTS.

18 31. The normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS causes exposures to
19 Lead.

20 32. DEFENDANTS know the normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the PRODUCTS
21 exposes consumers, end-users, and other individuals to Lead through dermal contact and/or ingestion.

22 33. DEFENDANTS intend to expose consumers, end-users, and other individuals in
23 California to Lead during their reasonably foreseeable and intended use of the PRODUCTS. Such
24 exposures to Lead occur through DEFENDANTS deliberate and non-accidental participation in the
25 California market.

26 34. The exposures to Lead caused by DEFENDANTS and endured by consumers and other
27 individuals in California are not exempt from the “clear and reasonable warning” requirements of
28 Proposition 65.

35. DEFENDANTS failed to provide a “clear and reasonable warning” to consumers and other individuals in California exposed to Lead through dermal contact and/or ingestion during their reasonably foreseeable and intended use of the PRODUCTS. Defendants continue to fail to provide such warning.

36. Contrary to the express policy and statutory prohibition of Proposition 65, consumers are exposed to Lead through dermal contact and ingestion during their use of PRODUCTS DEFENDANTS sold, sell and offer for sale without a “clear and reasonable warning.” Such consumers and other individuals in California suffer irreparable harms for which they have no plain, speedy, or adequate remedy at law.

37. DEFENDANTS manufacture, import, distribute, sell, and offer the PRODUCTS for sale or use in violation of Health and Safety Code § 25249.6. DEFENDANTS' violations continue beyond their receipt of KASB's Notices. As such, DEFENDANTS' violations are ongoing and continuous in nature and, unless enjoined, will continue in the future.

38. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(b), and as a consequence their acts and omissions, DEFENDANTS, and each of them, are liable for a maximum civil penalty of \$2,500 per violation.

39. As a consequence of DEFENDANTS' acts and omissions, Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(a) specifically authorizes the Court to grant the relief prayed for herein.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

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

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

1 2. That the Court, pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(a), issue preliminary and
2 permanent injunctions mandating DEFENDANTS recall PRODUCTS intended for sale in or into
3 California that do not bear a clear and reasonable warning;

4 3. That the Court assess civil penalties against DEFENDANTS, and each of them, in the
5 amount of \$2,500 per violation, according to proof at trial;

6 4. That the Court award plaintiff its reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of suit; and

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

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9 Dated: February 7, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

SEVEN HILLS LLP

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12 By: 

Brian C. Johnson

Attorneys for Plaintiff

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BEAUTIFUL