

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

ELECTRONICALLY  
FILED  
Superior Court of California,  
County of San Francisco

5 *Attorneys for Plaintiff*

12/19/2025  
Clerk of the Court  
BY: ANGELICA SUNGA  
Deputy Clerk

6 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

7 COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

8 GABRIEL ESPINOZA,

Case No.: CGC-25-632278

9 Plaintiff,

10 **COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES AND  
11 INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

12 vs.

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

OUTDOOR CAP CO., INC.,

15 Defendant.

16 Plaintiff Gabriel Espinoza (“Plaintiff”), by and through his attorneys, alleges the following  
17 cause of action in the public interest of the citizens of the State of California.

**BACKGROUND OF THE CASE**

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

23 2. This complaint is a representative action brought by Plaintiff in the public interest  
24 of the citizens of the State of California to enforce the People’s right to be informed of the health  
25 hazards caused by exposure to perfluorooctanoic acid (“PFOA”), a toxic chemical found in  
26 *Sportsman’s Warehouse*® SW blaze vests sold and/or distributed by defendant Outdoor Cap Co.,  
27 Inc. (“Outdoor Cap” or “Defendant”) in California.

3. PFOA is a harmful chemical known to the State of California to cause cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm. On November 10, 2017, the state of California listed PFOA as a chemical known to cause birth defects or other reproductive harm 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 25, 2022, the State of California listed PFOA as a chemical known to cause cancer.

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

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

6. Plaintiff alleges that Defendant distributes and/or offers for sale in California, without a requisite exposure warning, *Sportsman's Warehouse*® SW blaze vests (the "Products") that expose persons to PFOA when used for their intended purpose.

7. Defendant's failure to warn consumers and other individuals in California of the health hazards associated with exposure to PFOA in conjunction with the sale and/or distribution of the Products is a violation of Proposition 65 and subjects Defendant to the injunction and civil 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).

1       9. Plaintiff also seeks injunctive relief, preliminarily and permanently, requiring  
2 Defendant to provide purchasers or users of the Products with required warnings related to the  
3 dangers and health hazards associated with exposure to PFOA pursuant to Health and Safety Code  
4 § 25249.7(a).

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

## **PARTIES**

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

11        12. Defendant Outdoor Cap Co., Inc., through its business, effectively imports,  
12 distributes, sells, and/or offers the Products for sale or use in the State of California, or it implies  
13 by its conduct that it imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the Products for sale or use in the  
14 State of California. Plaintiff alleges that defendant Outdoor Cap Co., Inc. is a “person” in the  
15 course of doing business within the meaning of Health & Safety Code sections 25249.6 and  
16 25249.11.

## **VENUE AND JURISDICTION**

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

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

27       15. This Court has jurisdiction over Defendant because Defendant is either a citizen of  
28 the State of California, has sufficient minimum contacts with the State of California, is registered

1 with the California Secretary of State as foreign corporations authorized to do business in the State  
2 of California, and/or has otherwise purposefully availed itself of the California market. Such  
3 purposeful availment has rendered the exercise of jurisdiction by California courts consistent and  
4 permissible with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.

5 **STATUTORY BACKGROUND**

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

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

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

15 18. An exposure to a chemical in a consumer product is one “which results from a  
16 person’s acquisition, purchase, storage, consumption or other reasonably foreseeable use of a  
17 consumer good, or any exposure that results from receiving a consumer service.” (27 CCR §  
18 25602, para (b).) H&S Code § 25603(c) states that “a person in the course of doing business ...  
19 shall provide a warning to any person to whom the product is sold or transferred unless the product  
20 is packaged or labeled with a clear and reasonable warning.”

21 19. Pursuant to H&S Code § 25603.1, the warning may be provided by using one or  
22 more of the following methods individually or in combination:<sup>1</sup>

23 a. A warning that appears on a product’s label or other labeling.

24  
25  
26  
27 <sup>1</sup> Alternatively, a person in the course of doing business may elect to comply with the warning  
28 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.

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 November 10, 2017, the state of California listed PFOA as a chemical known to cause birth defects or other reproductive harm 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 25, 2022, the State of California listed PFOA as a chemical known to cause cancer. In summary, PFOA was listed under Proposition 65 as a chemical known to the State to cause cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm.

22. The exposures that are the subject of the Notice result from the purchase, acquisition, handling and recommended use of the Product. The primary route of exposure to the is through dermal absorption directly through the skin when consumers use, touch, or handle the Products. Exposure through ingestion will occur by touching the Product with subsequent touching

1 of the user's hand to mouth. No clear and reasonable warning is provided with the Products  
2 regarding the health hazards of exposure.

3 23. Defendant has processed, marketed, distributed, offered to sell and/or sold the  
4 Products in California since at least November 20, 2024. The Products continue to be distributed  
5 and sold in California without the requisite warning information.

6 24. At all times relevant to this action, Defendant have knowingly and intentionally  
7 exposed users of the Products to PFOA without first giving a clear and reasonable exposure  
8 warning to such individuals.

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

15 **SATISFACTION OF NOTICE REQUIREMENTS**

16 26. On September 24, 2024, Plaintiff purchased the Product from Sportsman's  
17 Warehouse, Inc. At the time of purchase, Defendant did not provide a Proposition 65 exposure  
18 warning for PFOA or any other Proposition 65 listed chemical in a manner consistent with H&S  
19 Code § 25603.1 as described *supra*.

20 27. The Product was sent to a testing laboratory for PFOA testing to determine the  
21 PFOA content of the Product.

22 28. On November 7, 2024, the laboratory provided the results of its analysis. Results  
23 of this test determined the Product exposes users to PFOA (the "Chemical Test Report").

24 29. Plaintiff provided the Chemical Test Report and Product to an analytical chemist  
25 to determine if, based on the findings of the Chemical Test Report and the reasonable and  
26 foreseeable use of the Product, exposure to PFOA will occur at levels that require Proposition 65  
27 warnings under the Clear and Reasonable Warnings section 25601 of Title 27 of the California  
28 Code of Regulations.

30. On November 20, 2024, Plaintiff received from the analytical chemist an exposure assessment report which concluded that persons in California who use the Products will be exposed to levels of PFOA that require a Proposition 65 exposure warning.

31. On November 20, 2024, Plaintiff gave notice of alleged violation of Health and Safety Code § 25249.6 (the “Notice”) to Defendant concerning the exposure of California citizens to PFOA contained in the Products without proper warning, subject to a private action to Defendant and to the California Attorney General’s office and the offices of the County District attorneys and City Attorneys for each city with a population greater than 750,000 persons wherein the herein violations allegedly occurred.

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

33. After receiving the Notice, and to Plaintiff's best information and belief, none of the noticed appropriate public enforcement agencies have commenced and diligently prosecuted a cause of action against Defendant under Proposition 65 to enforce the alleged violations which are the subject of the Notice.

34. Plaintiff is commencing this action more than sixty (60) days from the date of the Notice to Defendant, as required by law.

## **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

**(By Plaintiff against Defendant for the Violation of Proposition 65)**

35. Plaintiff hereby repeats and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 34 of this Complaint as though fully set forth herein.

36. Defendant has, at all times mentioned herein, acted as distributor, and/or retailer of the Product.

37. Use of the Products will expose users to PFOA, a hazardous chemical found on the Proposition 65 list of chemicals known to be hazardous to human health.

1       38. The Product does not comply with the Proposition 65 warning requirements.

2       39. Plaintiff, based on his best information and belief, avers that at all relevant times  
3 herein, and at least since November 20, 2024, continuing until the present, that Defendant has  
4 continued to knowingly and intentionally expose California users and consumers of the Product to  
5 PFOA without providing required warnings under Proposition 65.

6       40. The exposures that are the subject of the Notice result from the purchase,  
7 acquisition, handling and recommended use of the Product. The primary route of exposure to the  
8 is through dermal absorption directly through the skin when consumers use, touch, or handle the  
9 Products. Exposure through ingestion will occur by touching the Product with subsequent touching  
10 of the user's hand to mouth. No clear and reasonable warning is provided with the Products  
11 regarding the health hazards of exposure.

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

15       42. Defendant has knowledge that the normal and reasonably foreseeable use of the  
16 Products exposes individuals to PFOA, and Defendant intends that exposures to PFOA will occur  
17 by its deliberate, non-accidental participation in the importation, distribution, sale and offering of  
18 the Products to consumers in California

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

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

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

## **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

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

- A. That the court assess civil penalties against Defendant in the amount of \$2,500 per day for each violation for up to 365 days (up to a maximum civil penalty amount per violation of \$912,000.00) in accordance with Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(b);
- B. That the court preliminarily and permanently enjoin Defendant mandating Proposition 65 compliant warnings on the Products;
- C. That the court grant Plaintiff reasonable attorney's fees and costs of suit, in the amount of \$50,000.00.
- D. That the court grant any further relief as may be just and proper.

Dated: December 19, 2025

## BRODSKY SMITH

By: Evan J. Smith (SBN242352)  
Ryan P. Cardona (SBN302113)  
9465 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 300  
Beverly Hills, CA 90212  
Telephone: (877) 534-2590  
Facsimile: (310) 247-0160

*Attorneys for Plaintiff*