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Attorneys for Plaintiff

ELECTRONICALLY
FILED
Superior Court of California,
County of San Francisco

06/17/2025
Clerk of the Court
BY: WILMA CORRALES
Deputy Clerk

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

GABRIEL ESPINOZA,

Plaintiff,

vs.

ADIR INTERNATIONAL, LLC,

Defendant.

Case No.:

CGC-25-626241

**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES AND
INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

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

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

BACKGROUND OF THE CASE

1. Plaintiff brings this representative action on behalf of all California citizens to
enforce relevant portions of Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, codified at
the Health and Safety Code § 25249.5 et seq ("Proposition 65"), which reads, in relevant part,
"[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
giving clear and reasonable warning to such individual ...". Health & Safety Code § 25249.6.

2. This complaint is a representative action brought by Plaintiff in the public interest
of the citizens of the State of California to enforce the People's right to be informed of the health
hazards caused by exposure to di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP), a toxic chemical found in
products sold and/or distributed by defendant Adir International, LLC ("Adir" or "Defendant") in
California.

1 3. DEHP is a harmful chemical known to the State of California to cause cancer and
2 reproductive toxicity. On January 1, 1988, the State of California listed DEHP as a chemical known
3 to the State to cause cancer and it has come under the purview of Proposition 65 regulations since
4 that time. Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 27, § 27001(c); Health & Safety Code §§ 25249.8 & 25249.10(b).
5 On October 24, 2003, the State of California listed DEHP as a chemical known to cause
6 reproductive toxicity.

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 to be imposed upon defendants in a civil action for violations of Proposition 65.
15 Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(b). Proposition 65 also allows for any court of competent
16 jurisdiction to enjoin the actions of a defendant which “violate or threaten to violate” the statute.
17 Health & Safety Code § 25249.7.

18 6. Plaintiff alleges that Defendant distribute and/or offer for sale in California, without
19 a requisite exposure warning, (a) ESCA children’s bags manufactured, distributed, and/or sold by
20 JC USA Trading Inc., and (b) Bixbee children’s bags manufactured, distributed, and/or sold by
21 Schoolbags For Kids LLC (collectively, the “Products” and each a “Product”) that expose persons
22 to DEHP when used for their intended purpose.

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

27 8. Plaintiff seeks civil penalties against Defendant for their violations of Proposition
28 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 DEHP pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(a).

PARTIES

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

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.

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 or reproductive toxicity. H&S Code § 25249.6 states, in pertinent part:

12 No person in the course of doing business shall knowingly and intentionally expose any
13 individual to a chemical known to the state to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without
14 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:¹

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

24
25
26
27 ¹ 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.

1 b. Identification of the product at the retail outlet in a manner which provides
2 a warning. Identification may be through shelf labeling, signs, menus, or a combination
3 thereof.

4 c. The warnings provided pursuant to subparagraphs (a) and (b) shall be
5 prominently placed upon a product's labels or other labeling or displayed at the retail outlet
6 with such conspicuousness, as compared with other words, statements, designs, or devices
7 in the label, labeling or display as to render it likely to be read and understood by an
8 ordinary individual under customary conditions of purchase or use.

9 d. A system of signs, public advertising identifying the system and toll-free
10 information services, or any other system that provides clear and reasonable warnings.

11 20. Proposition 65 provides that any "person who violates or threatens to violate" the
12 statute may be enjoined in a court of competent jurisdiction. (H&S Code § 25249.7.) The phrase
13 "threaten to violate" is defined to mean creating "a condition in which there is a substantial
14 probability that a violation will occur." (H&S Code § 25249.11(e).) Violators are liable for civil
15 penalties of up to \$2,500.00 per day for each violation of the Act (H&S Code § 25249.7) for up to
16 365 days.

17 **FACTUAL BACKGROUND**

18 21. On January 1, 1988, the State of California listed DEHP as a chemical known to
19 the State to cause cancer and it has come under the purview of Proposition 65 regulations since
20 that time. Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 27, § 27001(c); Health & Safety Code §§ 25249.8 & 25249.10(b).
21 On October 24, 2003, the State of California listed DEHP as a chemical known to cause
22 reproductive toxicity.

23 22. The exposures that are the subject of the Notices result from the purchase,
24 acquisition, handling and recommended use of the Products. The primary route of exposure to the
25 chemical is through dermal absorption directly through the skin when consumers use, touch, or
26 handle the Products. Exposure through ingestion will occur by touching the Products with
27 subsequent touching of the user's hand to mouth. No clear and reasonable warning is provided
28 with the Products regarding the health hazards of exposure.

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

4 24. At all times relevant to this action, Defendant has knowingly and intentionally
5 exposed users of the Products to DEHP without first giving a clear and reasonable exposure
6 warning to such individuals.

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

13 **SATISFACTION OF NOTICE REQUIREMENTS**

14 26. On October 22, 2024, Plaintiff purchased the Product from Adir. At the time of
15 purchase, Adir did not provide a Proposition 65 exposure warning for DEHP or any other
16 Proposition 65 listed chemical in a manner consistent with H&S Code § 25603.1 as described
17 *supra*.

18 27. The Products were sent to a testing laboratory for phthalate testing to determine the
19 phthalate content of the Products.

20 28. On December 5, 2024, the laboratory provided the results of its analysis. Results of
21 this test determined the Products expose users to DEHP (the “Chemical Test Report”).

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

30. On December 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 DEHP that require a Proposition 65 exposure warning.

31. On December 20, 2024, Plaintiff gave notice of alleged violation of Health and Safety Code § 25249.6 (collectively, the “Notices” and each a “Notice”) to Defendant concerning the exposure of California citizens to DEHP from use of 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. See attached a true and correct copy of each Notice at Exhibits A – B.

32. The Notices 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 DEHP exposure, and that counsel believed there was meritorious and reasonable cause for a private action.

33. After receiving the Notices, 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 Notices.

34. Plaintiff is commencing this action more than sixty (60) days from the date of the Notices 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 Products.

1 37. Use of the Products will expose users and consumers thereof to DEHP, a hazardous
2 chemical found on the Proposition 65 list of chemicals known to be hazardous to human health.

3 38. The Products do not comply with the Proposition 65 warning requirements.

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

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

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

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

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

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

25 45. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(a), this Court is specifically
26 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 in accordance with Health and Safety Code §
6 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: June 17, 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

9465 WILSHIRE BLVD., STE. 300
BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90212
877.534.2590
www.brodskysmith.com

NEW JERSEY OFFICE
20 BRACE RD., STE. 350
CHERRY HILL, NJ 08034
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

December 20, 2024

President/CEO JC USA Trading Inc. c/o Janet Ren 1031 N. Todd Ave. Azusa, CA 91702	Member/Manager ADIR International, LLC c/o Elizabeth Van Horn 1605 W. Olympic Blvd., Suite 600 Los Angeles, CA 90015
Member/Manager ADIR International, LLC dba curacao c/o Elizabeth Van Horn 1605 W. Olympic Blvd., Suite 600 Los Angeles, CA 90015	Member/Manager ADIR International, LLC c/o The Corporation Trust Company Corporation Trust Center 1209 Orange Street Wilmington, DE 19801

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

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.

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE VIOLATION

1. **Enforcer:** Gabriel Espinoza, 3924 Carlin Ave., Lynwood, CA 90262-5204; (Ph) 424-285-4896.
2. **Alleged Violator(s):** JC USA Trading Inc.; ADIR International, I.LC; ADIR International, LLC dba curacao
3. **Time Period of Exposure:** Violations have been occurring since at least December 20, 2024 and are continuing to this day.
4. **Listed Chemical:** Di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP). DEHP is listed under Proposition 65 as a chemical known to the State to cause cancer and birth defect or other reproductive harm.
5. **Product:**

Product ²	Non- Exclusive Examples of the Product
Bag	ESCA Children's Bag UPC# 8 43688 11634 8

6. **Description of Exposure:** The exposures that are the subject of this Notice result from the purchase, acquisition, handling and recommended use of the Product. The primary route of exposure to the Listed Chemical is through dermal absorption directly through the skin when consumers use, touch, or handle the Products. Some amount of exposure through ingestion can occur by touching the Product with subsequent touching of the user's hand to mouth. 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 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.

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.

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, 9465 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90212, (877) 534-2590, esmith@brodskysmith.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'EJ 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

EXHIBIT “B”

LAW OFFICES
BRODSKY SMITH

9465 WILSHIRE BLVD., STE. 300
BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90212
877.534.2590
www.brodskysmith.com

NEW JERSEY OFFICE
20 BRACE RD., STE. 350
CHERRY HILL, NJ 08034
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

December 20, 2024

Member/Manager Schoolbags For Kids LLC c/o National Registered Agents, Inc. 208 So. LaSalle Street, Suite 814 Chicago, IL 60604-1101	Member/Manager Schoolbags For Kids LLC 2555 S. Leavitt Street Chicago, CA 60608
Member/Manager ADIR International, LLC dba curacao c/o Elizabeth Van Horn 1605 W. Olympic Blvd., Suite 600 Los Angeles, CA 90015	Member/Manager ADIR International, LLC c/o The Corporation Trust Company Corporation Trust Center 1209 Orange Street Wilmington, DE 19801
Member/Manager ADIR International, LLC c/o Elizabeth Van Horn 1605 W. Olympic Blvd., Suite 600 Los Angeles, CA 90015	

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

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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

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.

...” 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) 424-285-4896.
2. **Alleged Violator(s):** Schoolbags For Kids LLC; ADIR International, LLC; ADIR International, LLC dba curacao
3. **Time Period of Exposure:** Violations have been occurring since at least December 20, 2024 and are continuing to this day.
4. **Listed Chemical:** Di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP). DEHP is listed under Proposition 65 as a chemical known to the State to cause cancer and birth defect or other reproductive harm.
5. **Product:**

Product ²	Non- Exclusive Examples of the Product
Bag	Bixbee Children's Bag UPC# 8 50008 15929 9

6. **Description of Exposure:** The exposures that are the subject of this Notice result from the purchase, acquisition, handling and recommended use of the Product. The primary route of exposure to the Listed Chemical is through dermal absorption directly through the skin when consumers use, touch, or handle the Products. Some amount of exposure through ingestion can occur by touching the Product with subsequent touching of the user's hand to mouth. No clear and reasonable warning is provided with the Products regarding the health hazards of exposure to the Listed Chemical.

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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.

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.

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Sincerely,

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Evan J. Smith

Attachments

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Certificate of Service

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