

06/15/2023

David W. Slayton, Executive Officer / Clerk of Court

By:           N. Marshallian           Deputy

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3 An Association of Independent Law Corporations  
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8 Attorneys for Plaintiff,  
9 Consumer Advocacy Group, Inc.

10 **SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

11 **COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

12 CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC.,  
13 in the public interest,

14 Plaintiff,

15 v.

16 TAWA SUPERMARKET, INC. dba 99  
17 RANCH MARKET and dba 168 MARKET,  
18 a California corporation; WALONG  
19 MARKETING, INC., a California  
20 corporation;  
21 TAKAOKAYA, U.S.A., INC., a  
22 California Corporation;  
23 and DOES 1-250,

24 Defendants.

CASE NO. BC634011

**~~PROPOSED~~ CONSENT JUDGMENT  
AS TO DEFENDANT TAKAOKAYA  
U.S.A., INC.**

Health & Safety Code § 25249.5 *et seq.*

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1 **1.INTRODUCTION**

2 1.1 This Consent Judgment is entered into by and between plaintiff, CONSUMER  
3 ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. (referred to as “CAG”) acting on behalf of itself and in the interest  
4 of the public, and defendant, TAKAOKAYA, U.S.A., INC. (hereinafter referred to as  
5 “Defendant”), with each a Party to the action collectively referred to as “Parties.”

6 **1.2 Defendant and Products**

7 1.2.1 Defendant is a California corporation which employs ten or more persons.  
8 Defendant distributes, and sells Seaweed including but not limited to: “TAKAOKAYA  
9 U.S.A.”, “Koufuku Nori”, “Ajitsuke Momi Nori, Seasoned Seaweed”, “Packed In Los  
10 Angeles”, “Printed In Japan”, Net Wt: 1.41 Oz (40g), “Packed By Takaokaya U.S.A. Inc.”,  
11 “UPC: 7 35407 00451 0” (Hereinafter referred to as the “Covered Products”)

12 1.2.2 For purposes of this Consent Judgment, Defendant is deemed a person in  
13 the course of doing business in California and is subject to the provisions of the Safe Drinking  
14 Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, California Health & Safety Code §§ 25249.6 et seq.  
15 (“Proposition 65”).

16 **1.3 Chemicals of Concern**

17 1.3.1 Lead and Lead Compounds (hereinafter “Lead”) are known to the State of  
18 California to cause cancer and/or birth defects or other reproductive harm.

19 **1.4 Notices of Violation**

20 1.4.1 On or about November 3, 2014, CAG served Defendant and various  
21 public enforcement agencies with a document entitled “60-Day Notice of Violation” (hereinafter  
22 “Notice 1”) that provided the Defendant with notice of alleged violations of Health & Safety  
23 Code § 25249.6 for failing to warn individuals in California of exposures to Lead contained in  
24 Seaweed sold and/or distributed by Defendant. No other public enforcer has commenced or  
25 diligently prosecuted the allegations set forth in the Notice. (referred to as the “Notice”)

26 **1.5 Complaint**

1                   1.5.1 On September 14, 2016 CAG filed a complaint for civil penalties and  
2 injunctive relief in Los Angeles Superior Court, Case No. BC634011 against Retailer Defendant  
3 Tawa Supermarket, Inc. The initial Complaint alleges, among other things, that Retailer  
4 Defendant violated Proposition 65 by failing to give clear and reasonable warnings of exposure  
5 to Lead, from Covered Products.

6                   1.5.2 On December 8, 2020 CAG filed a second amended complaint for civil  
7 penalties and injunctive relief adding Defendant TAKAOKAYA USA INC. That Complaint  
8 alleges, among other things, that Retailer Defendant Tawa and Defendant violated Proposition 65  
9 by failing to give clear and reasonable warnings of exposure to Lead from Covered Products.

10                  1.5.3 On October 21, 2022, CAG filed a third amended complaint for civil  
11 penalties and injunctive relief (the “Complaint”). The Complaint alleges, among other things,  
12 that Defendant violated Proposition 65 by failing to give clear and reasonable warnings of  
13 exposure to Lead from Covered Products.

14                  1.6       **Consent to Jurisdiction**

15                  1.6.1 For purposes of this Consent Judgment, the Parties stipulate that this Court  
16 has jurisdiction over the allegations of violations contained in the Complaint and personal  
17 jurisdiction over Defendant as to the acts alleged in the Complaint, that venue is proper in the  
18 County of Los Angeles and that this Court has jurisdiction to enter this Consent Judgment as a  
19 full settlement and resolution of the allegations contained in cause of action one of the Complaint  
20 and of all claims which were or could have been raised by any person or entity based in whole or  
21 in part, directly or indirectly, on the facts alleged therein or arising therefrom or related thereto.

22                  1.7       **No Admission**

23                  1.7.1 This Consent Judgment resolves claims that are denied and disputed. The  
24 Parties enter into this Consent Judgment pursuant to a full and final settlement of any and all  
25 claims between the Parties for the purpose of avoiding prolonged litigation. Nothing in this  
26 Consent Judgment shall be construed as an admission by the Parties of any material allegation of  
27 the Complaint (each and every allegation of which Defendant denies), any fact, conclusion of  
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1 law, issue of law or violation of law, including without limitation, any admission concerning any  
2 violation of Proposition 65 or any other statutory, regulatory, common law, or equitable doctrine,  
3 or the meaning of the terms “knowingly and intentionally expose” or “clear and reasonable  
4 warning” as used in Health and Safety Code section 25249.6. Nothing in this Consent Judgment,  
5 nor compliance with its terms, shall constitute or be construed as an admission by the Parties of  
6 any fact, conclusion of law, issue of law, or violation of law, or of fault, wrongdoing, or liability  
7 by any Defendant, its officers, directors, employees, or parent, subsidiary or affiliated  
8 corporations, or be offered or admitted as evidence in any administrative or judicial proceeding  
9 or litigation in any court, agency, or forum. Furthermore, nothing in this Consent Judgment shall  
10 prejudice, waive or impair any right, remedy, argument, or defense the Parties may have in any  
11 other or future legal proceeding, except as expressly provided in this Consent Judgment.

12 **2. DEFINITIONS**

13 2.1 “Covered Products” means products specifically identified in Paragraph 1.2.1 sold  
14 or supplied by Defendant TAKAOKAYA, U.S.A., INC.

15 2.2 “Effective Date” means the date that this Consent Judgment is approved by the  
16 Court.

17 2.3 “Lead” means Lead and Lead Compounds.

18 **3. INJUNCTIVE RELIEF / REFORMULATION / CLEAR AND REASONABLE**  
19 **WARNINGS.**

20 3.1 After the Effective Date, Defendant shall not sell in California, offer for sale in  
21 California, or ship for sale in California any Covered Products unless the level of Lead does not  
22 exceed 75 parts per billion (“ppb”), unless Proposition 65 compliant warnings are used as set  
23 forth in the following paragraphs.

24 3.2 For any Covered Products that exceed their respective levels of Lead that are  
25 placed into the stream of commerce in California after the Effective Date, Defendant must  
26 provide a Proposition 65 compliant warning for the Covered Products as set forth below. Any  
27 warning provided pursuant to this section shall be affixed to the packaging of, or directly on, the  
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1 Covered Products, and be prominently placed with such conspicuousness as compared with other  
2 words, statements, designs, or devices as to render it likely to be read and understood by an  
3 ordinary individual under customary conditions before purchase or use. The warning must be set  
4 off from other surrounding information, enclosed in a box. Where the packaging of the Covered  
5 Product or a sign referring to the Covered Product includes consumer information as defined by  
6 California Code of Regulations title 27 §25600.1(c) in a language other than English, the  
7 warning must also be provided in that language in addition to English. Should Defendant sell or  
8 distribute any Covered Product through the internet, the warning will be posted in the manner  
9 provided for with respect to internet sales, as provided for in 27 CCR sections 25601 and 25602,  
10 as they may be subsequently amended. The Parties agree that the following warning language  
11 shall constitute compliance with Proposition 65 with respect to the alleged Lead in the Covered  
12 Products placed into the stream of commerce by Defendant after the Effective Date:

13 **WARNING:** Consuming this product can expose you to Lead, a  
14 chemical known to the State of California to cause cancer and birth  
15 defects or other reproductive harm. For more information go to  
[www.P65Warnings.ca.gov/food](http://www.P65Warnings.ca.gov/food).

16 3.3 For any Covered Products still existing in the Defendant's inventory as of the  
17 Effective Date, Defendant shall place a Proposition 65 compliant warning on them, unless the  
18 Covered Products does not exceed their respective levels of Lead. Any warning provided  
19 pursuant to this section shall comply with the warning requirements under Section 3.2 above.

20 3.4 Changes in the law and regulations applicable to Prop 65 occurring after this date  
21 shall be incorporated into the terms of this Consent Judgment.

#### 22 **4. SETTLEMENT PAYMENT**

23 4.1 **Payment and Due Date:** Within ten (10) days of the Effective Date, Defendant  
24 shall pay a total of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000.00) in full and complete settlement  
25 of all monetary claims by CAG related to the Notices, as follows:  
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27  
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1                   4.1.1 **Civil Penalty:** Defendant shall issue separate checks totaling fifty-seven  
2 thousand one hundred and sixty dollars (\$57,160.00) as penalties pursuant to Health & Safety  
3 Code § 25249.12:

4                   (a) Defendant will issue a check made payable to the State of California's  
5 Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment ("OEHHA") in the amount of forty-two  
6 thousand eight hundred and seventy dollars (\$42,870.00) representing 75% of the total penalty  
7 and Defendant will issue a separate check to CAG in the amount of fourteen thousand two  
8 hundred and ninety dollars (\$14,290.00) representing 25% of the total penalty; and

9                   (b) Separate 1099s shall be issued for each of the above payments:  
10 Defendant will issue a 1099 to OEHHA, P.O. Box 4010, Sacramento, CA 95184 (EIN: 68-  
11 0284486). Defendant will also issue a 1099 to CAG c/o Yeroushalmi & Yeroushalmi, 9100  
12 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 240W, Beverly Hills, California 90212.

13                   4.1.2 **Additional Settlement Payments:** Defendant shall make a separate  
14 payment, in the amount of forty-two thousand eight hundred and forty dollars (\$42,840.00) as an  
15 additional settlement payment to "Consumer Advocacy Group, Inc." pursuant to Health & Safety  
16 Code § 25249.7(b) and California Code of Regulations, Title 11 § 3203(d). Defendant will issue  
17 a separate check to CAG for the Additional Settlement Payment. CAG will use this payment as  
18 follows, eighty percent (80%) for fees of investigation, purchasing and testing for Proposition 65  
19 listed chemicals in various products, and for expert fees for evaluating exposures through various  
20 mediums, including but not limited to consumer product, occupational, and environmental  
21 exposures to Proposition 65 listed chemicals, and the cost of hiring consulting and retaining  
22 experts who assist with the extensive scientific analysis necessary for those files in litigation and  
23 to offset the costs of future litigation enforcing Proposition 65 but excluding attorney fees;  
24 twenty percent (20%) for administrative costs incurred during investigation and litigation to  
25 reduce the public's exposure to Proposition 65 listed chemicals by notifying those persons and/or  
26 entities believed to be responsible for such exposures and attempting to persuade those persons  
27 and/or entities to reformulate their products or the source of exposure to completely eliminate or  
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1 lower the level of Proposition 65 listed chemicals including but not limited to costs of  
2 documentation and tracking of products investigated, storage of products, website enhancement  
3 and maintenance, computer and software maintenance, investigative equipment, CAG's  
4 member's time for work done on investigations, office supplies, mailing supplies and postage.  
5 Within 30 days of a request from the Attorney General, CAG shall provide to the Attorney  
6 General copies of documentation demonstrating how the above funds have been spent. CAG  
7 shall be solely responsible for ensuring the proper expenditure of such additional settlement  
8 payment.

9           **4.1.3 Reimbursement of Attorneys Fees and Costs:** Defendant shall pay  
10 four hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000.00) to "Yeroushalmi & Yeroushalmi" as  
11 reimbursement for reasonable investigation fees and costs, attorneys' fees, and any other costs  
12 incurred as a result of investigating, bringing this matter to Defendant's attention, litigating, and  
13 negotiating a settlement in the public interest.

14           4.2 Other than the payment to OEHHA described above, all payments referenced in  
15 paragraphs 4.1.1, 4.1.2, and 4.1.3 above, shall be delivered to: Reuben Yeroushalmi,  
16 Yeroushalmi & Yeroushalmi, 9100 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 240W, Beverly Hills, CA 90212. The  
17 payment to OEHHA shall be delivered to Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment,  
18 Attn: Mike Gyurics, 1001 I Street, Mail Stop 12-B, Sacramento, California 95812. Concurrently  
19 with payment to OEHHA, Defendant shall provide CAG with written confirmation that the  
20 payment to OEHHA was delivered.

21  
22 **5. MATTERS COVERED BY THIS CONSENT JUDGMENT**

23           5.1 This Consent Judgment is a full, final, and binding resolution between CAG on  
24 behalf of itself and in the public interest and Defendant for failure to provide Proposition 65  
25 warning of exposure to Lead from the Covered Products as set forth in the Notices, and fully  
26 resolves all claims that have been or could have been asserted against Defendant in this action up  
27 through the Effective Date for failure to provide Proposition 65 warnings for the Covered  
28 Products regarding Lead. CAG, on behalf of itself and in the public interest, hereby discharges

1 Defendant, and their respective officers, directors, insurers, employees, parents, shareholders,  
2 divisions, subdivisions, subsidiaries, and their successors and assigns (“Defendant Releasees”)  
3 and all customers, distributors, retailers, and downstream entities in the distribution chain of the  
4 Covered Products, and the predecessors, successors and assigns of any of them, and all of their  
5 respective officers, directors, shareholders, members, managers, employees, agents only as to  
6 Covered Products sold by the Defendant (collectively, “Downstream Releasees”), for all  
7 Covered Products placed into the stream of commerce up through the Effective Date for  
8 violations of Proposition 65 based on exposure to Lead from the Covered Products. Defendant’s  
9 compliance with the terms of this Consent Judgment shall be deemed to constitute compliance  
10 with Proposition 65 regarding alleged exposures to Lead from the Covered Products. Nothing in  
11 this Section affects CAG’s right to commence or prosecute an action under Proposition 65  
12 against any person other than Defendant Releasees or Downstream Releasees after the Effective  
13 Date. The scope of the released products is limited to Covered Products sold, supplied and/or  
14 distributed for sale by TAKAOKAYA, U.S.A., INC. only. The foregoing release includes  
15 Retailer Defendant Tawa but only as to the Takaokaya Covered Products and not as to any other  
16 products alleged in the Complaint.

17  
18 5.2 CAG on behalf of itself, its past and current agents, representatives, attorneys,  
19 successors, and/or assignees, hereby waives all rights to institute or participate in, directly or  
20 indirectly, any form of legal action and releases all claims, including, without limitation, all  
21 actions, and causes of action, in law or in equity, suits, liabilities, demands, obligations,  
22 damages, costs, fines, penalties, losses, or expenses (including, but not limited to, investigation  
23 fees, expert fees, and attorneys’ fees) of any nature whatsoever, whether known or unknown,  
24 fixed or contingent (collectively “Claims”), against the Released Parties arising from any  
25 violation of Proposition 65 or any other statutory or common law regarding the failure to warn  
26 about exposure to Lead from the Covered Products. In furtherance of the foregoing, as to alleged  
27 exposures to Lead from the Covered Products, CAG on behalf of itself only, hereby waives any  
28 and all rights and benefits which it now has, or in the future may have, conferred upon it with



1 respect to Claims arising from any violation of Proposition 65 or any other statutory or common  
2 law regarding the failure to warn about exposure to Lead from the Covered Products by virtue of  
3 the provisions of section 1542 of the California Civil Code, which provides as follows:

4           A GENERAL RELEASE DOES NOT EXTEND TO CLAIMS THAT THE  
5           CREDITOR OR RELEASING PARTY DOES NOT KNOW OR SUSPECT TO  
6           EXIST IN HIS OR HER FAVOR AT THE TIME OF EXECUTING THE  
7           RELEASE AND THAT, IF KNOWN BY HIM OR HER, WOULD HAVE  
8           MATERIALLY AFFECTED HIS OR HER SETTLEMENT WITH THE  
9           DEBTOR OR RELEASED PARTY.

10 CAG understands and acknowledges that the significance and consequence of this waiver of  
11 California Civil Code section 1542 is that even if CAG suffers future damages arising out of or  
12 resulting from, or related directly or indirectly to, in whole or in part, Claims arising from any  
13 violation of Proposition 65 or any other statutory or common law regarding the failure to warn  
14 about exposure to Lead from the Covered Products, including but not limited to any exposure to,  
15 or failure to warn with respect to exposure to Lead from the Covered Products, CAG will not be  
16 able to make any claim for those damages against Released Parties. Furthermore, CAG  
17 acknowledges that it intends these consequences for any such Claims arising from any violation  
18 of Proposition 65 or any other statutory or common law regarding the failure to warn about  
19 exposure to Lead from Covered Products as may exist as of the date of this release but which  
20 CAG does not know exist, and which, if known, would materially affect their decision to enter  
21 into this Consent Judgment, regardless of whether their lack of knowledge is the result of  
22 ignorance, oversight, error, negligence, or any other cause.

## 23 **6. ENTRY OF CONSENT JUDGMENT**

24           6.1 CAG shall file a motion seeking approval of this Consent Judgment pursuant to  
25 California Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(f). Upon entry of the Consent Judgment, CAG and  
26 Defendant waive their respective rights to a hearing or trial on the allegations of the Complaint.

27           6.2 The Parties shall make all reasonable efforts possible to have the Consent  
28 Judgment approved by the Court.

1           6.3     If this Consent Judgment is not approved in full by the Court, (a) this Consent  
2 Judgment and any and all prior agreements between the Parties merged herein shall terminate  
3 and become null and void, and the actions shall revert to the status that existed prior to the  
4 execution date of this Consent Judgment; (b) no term of this Consent Judgment or any draft  
5 thereof, or of the negotiation, documentation, or other part or aspect of the Parties' settlement  
6 discussions, shall have any effect, nor shall any such matter be admissible in evidence for any  
7 purpose in this Action, or in any other proceeding; and (c) the Parties agree to meet and confer to  
8 determine whether to modify the terms of the Consent Judgment and to resubmit it for approval.

9           **7.     MODIFICATION OF JUDGMENT**

10           7.1     This Consent Judgment may be modified only upon written agreement of the  
11 Parties and upon entry of a modified Consent Judgment by the Court thereon, or upon motion of  
12 any party as provided by law and upon entry of a modified Consent Judgment by the Court.

13           7.2     Any Party seeking to modify this Consent Judgment shall attempt in good faith to  
14 meet and confer with the other Party prior to filing a motion to modify the Consent Judgment.

15           **8.     RETENTION OF JURISDICTION**

16           8.1     This Court shall retain jurisdiction of this matter to implement and enforce the  
17 terms of this Consent Judgment under Code of Civil Procedure § 664.6.

18           8.2     In any proceeding brought by either Party to enforce this Consent Judgment, the  
19 prevailing party shall be entitled to recover its reasonable attorney's fees and costs.

20           **10.    DUTIES LIMITED TO CALIFORNIA**

21           9.1     This Consent Judgment shall have no effect on Covered Products sold by  
22 Defendant outside the State of California.

23           **10.    SERVICE ON THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

24           10.1    CAG shall serve a copy of this Consent Judgment, signed by the Parties, on the  
25 California Attorney General so that the Attorney General may review this Consent Judgment  
26 prior to its approval by the Court. No sooner than forty-five (45) days after the Attorney General  
27 has received the aforementioned copy of this Consent Judgment, and in the absence of any  
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1 written objection by the Attorney General to the terms of this Consent Judgment, may the Court  
2 approve this Consent Judgment.

3 **11. ATTORNEY FEES**

4 11.1 Except as specifically provided in Section 4.1.3 and 8.2, each Party shall bear its  
5 own costs and attorney fees in connection with this action.

6 **12. GOVERNING LAW**

7 12.1 The validity, construction and performance of this Consent Judgment shall be  
8 governed by the laws of the State of California, without reference to any conflicts of law  
9 provisions of California law.

10 12.2 The terms of this Consent Judgment shall be governed by the laws of the State of  
11 California. In the event that Proposition 65 is amended, repealed, preempted, or is otherwise  
12 rendered inapplicable by reason of law generally, or if any of the provisions of this Consent  
13 Judgment are rendered inapplicable or are no longer required as a result of any such amendment,  
14 repeal or preemption, or rendered inapplicable by reason of law generally as to the Covered  
15 Products, then any Defendant subject to this Consent Judgment may provide written notice to  
16 CAG of any asserted change in the law, and shall have no further obligations pursuant to this  
17 Consent Judgment with respect to, and to the extent that, the Covered Products are so affected.  
18 Nothing in this Consent Judgment shall be interpreted to relieve a Defendant from any obligation  
19 to comply with any pertinent state or federal law or regulation.

20 12.3 The Parties, including their counsel, have participated in the preparation of this  
21 Consent Judgment and this Consent Judgment is the result of the joint efforts of the Parties. This  
22 Consent Judgment was subject to revision and modification by the Parties and has been accepted  
23 and approved as to its final form by all Parties and their counsel. Accordingly, any uncertainty or  
24 ambiguity existing in this Consent Judgment shall not be interpreted against any Party as a result  
25 of the manner of the preparation of this Consent Judgment. Each Party to this Consent Judgment  
26 agrees that any statute or rule of construction providing that ambiguities are to be resolved  
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1 against the drafting Party should not be employed in the interpretation of this Consent Judgment  
2 and, in this regard, the Parties hereby waive California Civil Code § 1654.

3 **13. EXECUTION AND COUNTERPARTS**

4 13.1 This Consent Judgment may be executed in counterparts and by means of  
5 facsimile or portable document format (pdf), which taken together shall be deemed to constitute  
6 one document and have the same force and effect as original signatures.

7 **14. NOTICES**

8 14.1 Any notices under this Consent Judgment shall be by First-Class Mail or E-mail.

9  
10 If to CAG:

11 Reuben Yeroushalmi  
12 YEROUSHALMI & YEROUSHALMI  
13 9100 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 240W  
14 Beverly Hills, CA 90212  
15 (310) 623-1926  
16 Email: lawfirm@yeroushalmi.com

17  
18 If to Defendant.:

19 George Salmas  
20 george.salmas@thefoodlawyers.com  
21 Michael R. Hambly  
22 michael.hambly@thefoodlawyers.com  
23 THE FOOD LAWYERS  
24 1880 Century Park East, Suite 611  
25 Los Angeles, CA 90067

26  
27 **15. AUTHORITY TO STIPULATE**

28 15.1 Each signatory to this Consent Judgment certifies that he or she is fully authorized  
by the party he or she represents to enter into this Consent Judgment and to execute it on behalf of  
the party represented and legally to bind that party.

<b>AGREED TO:</b>	<b>AGREED TO:</b>
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Date: <u>June 5</u> , 2023	Date: <u>6/7</u> , 2023
<u><i>Michael Marcus</i></u>	<u><i>[Signature]</i></u>
Name: <u>Michael Marcus</u>	Name: <u>Hirochika Tsuido</u>
Title: <u>Director</u>	Title: <u>President</u>
CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC.	TAKAOKAYA, U.S.A., INC.

IT IS SO ORDERED. ~~Ujæ c-A Á k^A[ æ^E~~

Date: 06/15/2023



**Maurice A. Leiter**  
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT  
Maurice A. Leiter / Judge