

	Attorneys for Plaintiffs	FILED ALAMEDA COUNTY  SEP 0 1 2020  CLERK OF THE SUPERIOR COURT By Carnill California  Deputy	
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11	SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA		
12	COUNTY OF ALAMEDA		
13	EMIA BELL, KINGPUN CHENG, GABRIEL	Case No.: RG20063575	
14	I E C DINKYYZ A	CONSENT JUDGMENT	
15	Plaintiffs,	Judge: Julia Spain Dept.: 520	
16	v.	Hearing Date: August 12, 2020	
17	ELITE HOME PRODUCTS, INC.	Hearing Time: 2:00 PM Reservation #: R-2183640	
18	Defendant.		
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#### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Parties. This Consent Judgment is entered into by and between plaintiffs Ema Bell ("Bell"), Anthony Ferreiro ("Ferreiro"), Precila Balabbo ("Balabbo"), Gabriel Espinoza ("Espinoza"), and Kingpun Cheng ("Cheng") acting on behalf of the public interest (hereinafter "Plaintiffs") and defendant Elite Home Products, Inc. ("Elite Home" or "Defendant") with Plaintiffs and Defendant collectively referred to as the "Parties" and each of them as a "Party." Plaintiffs are individuals residing in California that seek to promote awareness of exposures to toxic chemicals and improve human health by reducing or eliminating hazardous substances contained in consumer products. Elite Home is alleged to be a person in the course of doing business for purposes of Proposition 65, Cal. Health & Safety Code §§ 25249.6 et seq.
- 1.2 Allegations and Representations. Plaintiffs alleges that Defendant has exposed individuals to di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP) from its sales of carry/storage cases for bedding products including, but not limited to, sheets, shams, quilts and /or pillowcases supplied by Elite Home for sale in California without providing a clear and reasonable exposure warning pursuant to Proposition 65. DEHP is listed under Proposition 65 as a chemical known to the State of California to cause cancer and reproductive toxicity.

#### 1.3 Notices of Violation/Complaint.

- 1.3.1 On or about December 4, 2018, plaintiff Cheng served The TJX Companies, Inc. ("TJX") and various public enforcement agencies with a document entitled "60-Day Notice of Violation" pursuant to Health & Safety Code §25249.7(d) (the "2018 Notice"), alleging that TJX violated Proposition 65 by failing to warn consumers and customers that use of carry/storage cases for DreamScape bedding exposes users in California to DEHP. Elite Home was subsequently identified as the manufacturer and supplier of the DreamScape sheet carry/storage case and entered negotiations with Cheng as indemnitor to TJX to resolve Cheng's claims concerning the products identified in the 2018 Notice.
- 1.3.2 On or about July 23, 2019, plaintiffs Ferreiro, Bell and Balabbo served Elite Home, Ross Stores, Inc. ("Ross"), TJX, and various public enforcement agencies with a

document entitled "60-Day Notice of Violation" pursuant to Health & Safety Code §25249.7(d) (the "July 2019 Notice"), alleging that Elite Home violated Proposition 65 by failing to warn consumers and customers that use of storage/carry cases for Hotel Rosemont Luxury Collection pillowcases, Fiona & Maddox sheet sets, and Palmetto Bay Coastal Collection pillowcases exposes users in California to DEHP.

- 1.3.3 On or about October 25, 2019, plaintiff Espinoza served TJX, Marshalls of MA, Inc. ("Marshalls"), and various public enforcement agencies with a document entitled "60-Day Notice of Violation" pursuant to Health & Safety Code §25249.7(d) (the "October 2019 Notice"), alleging that TJX and Marshalls violated Proposition 65 for failing to warn consumers and customers that use of storage/carry cases for Inspirational Collection sheet sets exposes users in California to DEHP. Elite Home was subsequently identified as the manufacturer and supplier of the Inspirational Collection sheet sets carry/storage case and entered negotiations with Espinoza as indemnitor to TJX and Marshalls to resolve Espinoza's claims concerning the products identified in the October 2019 Notice.
- 1.3.4 On or about January 9, 2020, Plaintiff Ferreiro served Ross and various public enforcement agencies with a document entitled "60-Day Notice of Violation" pursuant to Health & Safety Code § 25249.37 (the "January 2020 Notice"), alleging that Ross violated Proposition 65 for failing to warn consumers and customers that use of storage/carry cases for Luna & Chase sheet sets exposes users in California to DEHP. Elite Home was subsequently identified as the manufacturer and supplier of the Luna & Chase sheet sets carry/storage case and entered negotiations with Ferreiro as indemnitor to Ross to resolve Ferreiro's claims concerning the products identified in the January 2020 Notice.
- 1.3.5 The 2018 Notice, July 2019 Notice, October 2019 Notice, and January 2020 Notice shall be referred to collectively as the "Notices."
- 1.3.6 No public enforcer has brought and is diligently prosecuting the claims alleged in the Notices. On June 3, 2020, Plaintiffs filed a complaint (the "Complaint" or the "Action") in the matter.

- 1.3.7 This settlement is entered into among the Parties as a global settlement of all claims brought by Plaintiffs in the Notices served on Elite Home and on TJX, Marshalls, and Ross and its affiliates and subsidiaries regarding alleged exposures to DEHP and other Listed Phthalates (identified herein) in Covered Products supplied by Elite Home.
- 1.4 For purposes of this Consent Judgment only, the Parties stipulate that this Court has jurisdiction over Defendant as to the allegations contained in the Action filed in this matter, that venue is proper in the County of Alameda, and that this Court has jurisdiction to approve, enter, and oversee the enforcement of this Consent Judgment as a full and final binding resolution of all claims which were or could have been raised in the Action based on the facts alleged therein and/or in the Notices.
- 1.5 Defendant denies the material allegations contained in the Notices and Complaint and maintains that it has not violated Proposition 65. Nothing in this Consent Judgment shall be construed as an admission by Defendant of any fact, finding, issue of law, or violation of law; nor shall compliance with this Consent Judgment constitute or be construed as an admission by Defendant of any fact, finding, conclusion, issue of law, or violation of law, such being specifically denied by Defendant. However, this Section shall not diminish or otherwise affect the obligations, responsibilities, and duties of Defendant under this Consent Judgment.

#### 2. **DEFINITIONS**

- 2.1 Covered Products. The term "Covered Products" means carry/storage cases for bedding products including, but not limited to, sheets, shams, quilts and /or pillowcases supplied by Elite Home for sale in California, including, but not limited to, the Covered Products sold under the brand names listed on Exhibit A.
- 2.2 **Listed Phthalates**. The term "Listed Phthalates" means DEHP, butyl benzyl phthalate ("BBP"), di-n-butyl phthalate ("DBP"), di-isodecyl phthalate ("DIDP"), di-n-hexyl phthalate (DnHP), and diisononyl phthalate (DINP).
- 2.3 Effective Date. The term "Effective Date" means the date this Consent Judgment is entered as a Judgment of the Court.

# 3. INJUNCTIVE RELIEF: WARNINGS

- 3.1 Reformulation of Covered Products. As of the Effective Date, and continuing thereafter, Elite Home shall ensure that Covered Products that it manufactures, imports, distributes, sells or offers for sale in California are either: (a) Reformulated Products pursuant to § 3.2, below; or (b) labeled with a clear and reasonable exposure warning pursuant to §§ 3.3 and 3.4, below.
- 3.2 Reformulation Standard. "Reformulated Products" shall mean Covered Products that contain concentrations less than or equal to 0.1% (1,000 parts per million (ppm) of each of the Listed Phthalates when analyzed pursuant to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency testing methodologies 3580A and 8270C or other methodology utilized by federal or state government agencies for the purpose of determining the phthalate content in a solid substance.
- 2.3 Clear and Reasonable Warning. As of the Effective Date, a clear and reasonable exposure warning as set forth in this §§ 3.3 and 3.4 must be provided by Elite Home for all Covered Products that it manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, or offers for sale in California that are not Reformulated Products. There shall be no obligation for Defendant to provide a warning for Covered Products shipped by Elite Home prior to the Effective Date for sale in California. The warning shall consist of either the Warning or Alternative Warning described in §§ 3.3(a) or (b), respectively!:

# 3.4 Warning Language:

# 3.4.1 Warning:

⚠ WARNING: This product can expose you to chemicals including di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP), which is known to the State of California to cause

To the extent Defendant determines that the Covered Products for which a warning statement is required under § 3.3 above does not contain DEHP in concentrations in excess of 1,000 ppm, if it chooses not to use an Alternative Warning, it shall substitute the name of at least one of the Listed Phthalates present in concentrations greater than 1,000 ppm in the Covered Products for DEHP in the Warning shown in § 3.3(a) above. In this event, if Defendant has determined that the concentration of DINP in the Covered Product is 1,000 ppm or less, it shall delete the term "cancer and" from the warning statement shown in either §§ 3.3(a) or 3.3(b) above. Alternatively, if the only Listed Phthalate present in concentrations greater than 1,000 ppm in the Covered Product is determined by Defendant to be DINP, then in addition to identifying it instead of DEHP, Defendant shall delete the reference to reproductive harm effects in using either of the warning statements shown in §§ 3.3(a) and 3.3(b) above.

cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm. For more information go to www.P65Warnings.ca.gov.

# 3.4.2 Alternative Warning:

⚠ WARNING: Cancer and Reproductive Harm - www.P65Warnings.ca.gov.

- "WARNING:" in all capital letters and in bold font, followed by a colon. The warning symbol to the left of the word "WARNING:" must be a black exclamation point in a yellow equilateral triangle with a black outline, except that if the sign or label for the Covered Product does not use the color yellow, the symbol may be in black and white. The symbol must be in a size no smaller than the height of the word "WARNING:". The warning shall be affixed to or printed on the Covered Products' packaging or labeling and displayed with such conspicuousness, as compared with other words, statements, or designs as to render it likely to be read and understood by an ordinary individual under customary conditions of purchase or use.
- 3.6 If Defendant sells Covered Products via an internet website to customers located in California, the warning requirements of this section shall be satisfied if the foregoing warning appears either: (a) on the same web page on which a Covered Product is displayed and/or described; (b) on the same page as the price for the Covered Product; or (c) on one or more web pages displayed to a purchaser prior to purchase during the checkout process. Alternatively, a symbol consisting of a black exclamation point in a yellow or white equilateral triangle may appear adjacent to or immediately following the display, description, price, or checkout listing of the Covered Product, if the warning statement appears elsewhere on the same web page in a manner that clearly associates it with the product(s) to which the warning applies.
- 3.7 Compliance with Warning Regulations. Defendant shall be deemed to be in compliance with this Consent Judgment by either adhering to §§ 3.3 and 3.4 of this Consent Judgment or by complying with warning requirements adopted by the State of California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment ("OEHHA") after the Effective Date.

MONETARY TERMS

- 4.1 Within fourteen (14) days of the date this Consent Judgment is fully executed by the Parties, Elite Home shall pay \$12,500, one half of the total monetary settlement amount of \$25,000, into its counsel Norton Rose Fulbright's client trust account. Elite Homes shall deposit the remaining balance, \$12,500, of the total monetary settlement to its counsel Norton Rose Fulbright's client trust account no later than June 15, 2020. Within fifteen (15) business days of the Effective Date, and on the condition that Elite Homes has paid the total monetary settlement amount into Norton Rose Fulbright's client trust account, Norton Rose Fulbright shall issue payments out of the client trust account as stated in Sections 4.2 and 4.3 of this Consent Judgment.
- 4.2 **Civil Penalty.** \$3,000.00 as a Civil Penalty pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(b), is to be apportioned in accordance with California Health & Safety Code § 25192, with 75% of these funds remitted to OEHHA and the remaining 25% of the Civil Penalty remitted to Plaintiffs, as provided by California Health & Safety Code § 25249.12(d).
- 4.1.1 Three (3) separate checks for the Civil Penalty payment to (a) "OEHHA" in the amount of \$2,250.00; to (b) "Brodsky & Smith, LLC in Trust for Bell, Ferreiro, Balabbo, and Espinoza" in the amount of \$600.00; and to (c) "Sy & Smith, PC in Trust for Cheng" in the amount of \$150.00. Payment owed to Plaintiffs pursuant to this Section shall be delivered to the following payment address:

Evan J. Smith, Esquire Brodsky & Smith, LLC Two Bala Plaza, Suite 510 Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

Payment owed to OEHHA (EIN: 68-0284486) pursuant to this Section shall be delivered directly to OEHHA (Memo Line "Prop 65 Penalties") at one of the following address(es):

For United States Postal Service Delivery:

Mike Gyurics
Fiscal Operations Branch Chief
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
P.O. Box 4010
Sacramento, CA 95812-4010

For Non-United States Postal Service Delivery:

Mike Gyurics
Fiscal Operations Branch Chief
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

- 4.2.1 A copy of the check payable to OEHHA shall be mailed to Brodsky & Smith, LLC at the address set forth above as proof of payment to OEHHA.
- 4.3 Attorneys' Fees. \$22,000.00 to Brodsky & Smith, LLC ("Brodsky Smith") as complete reimbursement for Plaintiffs' attorneys' fees and costs incurred as a result of investigating, bringing this matter to Defendant's attention, litigating and negotiating and obtaining judicial approval of a settlement in the public interest, pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure § 1021.5.
  - 4.3.1 Within thirty (30) days of the Effective Date, Brodsky Smith shall pay \$8,290.00 to Sy & Smith, PC as complete reimbursement for plaintiff Cheng's attorneys' fees and costs incurred in the Action, and the \$150 reimbursement of plaintiff Cheng's portion of the Civil Penalty. Payment owed to Sy & Smith, PC pursuant to this Section shall be delivered by Brodsky Smith directly to Sy & Smith, PC at the following address:

Parker A. Smith Sy & Smith, PC 11622 El Camino Real Suite 100 San Diego, CA 92130

# 5. <u>RELEASE OF ALL CLAIMS</u>

5.1 This Consent Judgment is a full, final, and binding resolution between Plaintiffs acting on their own behalf, and on behalf of the public interest, and Elite Home, and its respective parents, shareholders, members, directors, officers, managers, employees, representatives, agents. attorneys, divisions, subdivisions, subsidiaries, partners, sister companies, and affiliates ("Defendant Releasees"), and all entities from whom it obtains and to whom it directly or indirectly distributes or sell Covered Products, including but not limited to manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, wholesalers, customers, licensors, licensees retailers, franchisees, and cooperative members, including but not limited to TJX and Ross and their respective parents, shareholders, members, directors, officers, managers, employees, representatives, agents, attorneys, divisions,

 subdivisions, subsidiaries, partners, sister companies, and affiliates ("Downstream Releasees"), of all claims for violations of Proposition 65 that were or could have been brought based on exposure to DEHP from Covered Products as set forth in the Notices, with respect to any Covered Products manufactured, distributed, or sold by Defendant prior to the Effective Date<sup>2</sup>. As of the Effective Date, compliance with the terms of this Consent Judgment shall be deemed to constitute compliance with Proposition 65 with regard to Listed Phthalates in the Covered Products.

5.2 In addition to the foregoing, Plaintiffs, on behalf of themselves, their past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, and successors and/or assignees, and *not* in their representative capacity, hereby waive all rights to institute or participate in, directly or indirectly, any form of legal action and releases Defendant, Defendant Releasees, and Downstream Releasees from any and all manner of actions, causes of action, claims, demands, rights, suits, obligations, debts, contracts, agreements, promises, liabilities, damages, charges, losses, costs, expenses, and attorneys' fees, of any nature whatsoever, known or unknown, in law or equity, fixed or contingent, now or in the future, with respect to any alleged violations of Proposition 65 related to or arising from exposure to Listed Phthalates in Covered Products manufactured, distributed, or sold by Defendant, Defendant Releasees or Downstream Releasees. With respect to the foregoing waivers and releases in this paragraph, Plaintiffs hereby specifically waive any and all rights and benefits which they now have, or in the future may have, conferred by virtue of the provisions of § 1542 of the California Civil Code, which provides as follows:

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

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Without prejudice to the rights public prosecutors authorized to represent the People pursuant to Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(c) may otherwise have, this Consent Judgment shall have preclusive effect such that no other potential plaintiff, whether purporting to act in his, her, or its interests or the public interest, shall be permitted to pursue and/or take any action against Defendant, Defendant Releasees, and/or the Downstream Releasees with respect to any violation of Proposition 65 that was alleged in the Complaint or that otherwise could have been brought pursuant to the allegations set forth in the Notices.

5.3 Defendant waives any and all claims against Plaintiffs, their attorneys and other representatives, for any and all actions taken or statements made (or those that could have been taken or made) by Plaintiffs and their attorneys and other representatives, whether in the course of investigating claims or otherwise seeking enforcement of Proposition 65 against it in this matter, and/or with respect to Covered Products.

## 6. <u>INTEGRATION</u>

6.1 This Consent Judgment contains the sole and entire agreement of the Parties and any and all prior negotiations and understandings related hereto shall be deemed to have been merged within it. No representations or terms of agreement other than those contained herein exist or have been made by any Party with respect to the other Party or the subject matter hereof.

## 7. **GOVERNING LAW**

7.1 The terms of this Consent Judgment shall be governed by the laws of the State of California and apply within the State of California. In the event that Proposition 65 is repealed or is otherwise rendered inapplicable by reason of law generally, or as to Covered Products, then Defendant shall have no further obligations pursuant to this Consent Judgment with respect to, and to the extent that, Covered Products are so affected.

#### 8. NOTICES

8.1 Unless specified herein, all correspondence and notices required to be provided pursuant to this Consent Judgment shall be in writing and personally delivered or sent by: (i) first-class, (registered or certified mail) return receipt requested; or (ii) overnight courier on any party by the other party at the following addresses:

For Elite Home:

Scott Perretz
Elite Home Products Inc.
95 Mayhill Street
Saddle Brook, NJ 07663

With a copy to:

Jeffrey Margulies Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP 555 South Flower Street, Forty-First Floor

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Los Angeles, CA 90071

For plaintiffs Bell, Ferreiro, Balabbo and Espinoza:

Evan Smith Brodsky & Smith, LLC 9595 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 900 Beverly Hills, CA 90212

And

For plaintiff Cheng:

Parker A. Smith Sy & Smith, PC 11622 El Camino Real, Ste. 100 San Diego, CA 92130

Any party, from time to time, may specify in writing to the other party a change of address to which all notices and other communications shall be sent.

# 9. <u>COUNTERPARTS; FACSIMILE SIGNATURES</u>

9.1 This Consent Judgment may be executed in counterparts and by facsimile, each of which shall be deemed an original, and all of which, when taken together, shall constitute one and the same document.

# 10. <u>COMPLIANCE WITH HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 25249.7(f)/COURT APPROVAL</u>

- 10.1 Plaintiffs agree to comply with the requirements set forth in California Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(f) and to promptly bring a Motion for Approval of this Consent Judgment. Defendants agree they shall support approval of such Motion.
- This Consent Judgment shall not be effective until it is approved and entered by the Court and shall be null and void if, for any reason, it is not approved by the Court. In such case, the Parties agree to meet and confer on how to proceed and if such agreement is not reached within 30 days, the case shall proceed on its normal course.
- 10.3 If the Court approves this Consent Judgment and is reversed or vacated by an appellate court, the Parties shall meet and confer as to whether to modify the terms of this Consent

Judgment. If the Parties do not jointly agree on a course of action to take, the case shall proceed on its normal course on the trial court's calendar.

#### 11. MODIFICATION

11.1 This Consent Judgment may be modified only by further stipulation of the Parties and the approval of the Court or upon the granting of a motion brought to the Court by either Party.

#### 12. ATTORNEY'S FEES

- 12.1 A Party who unsuccessfully brings or contests an action arising out of this Consent Judgment shall be required to pay the prevailing party's reasonable attorney's fees and costs.
- 12.2 Nothing in this Section shall preclude a Party from seeking an award of sanctions pursuant to law.

## 13. RETENTION OF JURISDICTION

13.1 This Court shall retain jurisdiction of this matter to implement or modify the Consent Judgment.

## 14. AUTHORIZATION

14.1 The undersigned are authorized to execute this Consent Judgment on behalf of their respective Parties and have read, understood and agree to all of the terms and conditions of this document and certify that he or she is fully authorized by the Party he or she represents to execute the Consent Judgment on behalf of the Party represented and legally bind that Party. Except as explicitly provided herein each Party is to bear its own fees and costs.

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