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FILED
Superior Court of California
County of Los Angeles
06/15/2023

David W. Slayton, Executive Officer / Clerk of Court

N. Marshalian

Deputy

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YEROUSHALMI & YEROUSHALMI

An Association of Independent Law Corporations 9100 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 240W

3 Beverly Hills, California 90212

Telephone: 310.623.1926 Facsimile: 310.623.1930

Attorneys for Plaintiff,

Consumer Advocacy Group, Inc.

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

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

Plaintiff,

v.

TAKAOKAYA U.S.A., INC., a California Corporation; CALIFORNIA MARKETPLACE, INC., a

California Corporation; 16

and DOES 1-40,

Defendants.

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CASE NO. 20STCV38763

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

Health & Safety Code § 25249.5 et seq.

1.INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Consent Judgment is entered into by and between plaintiff, CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC. (referred to as "CAG") acting on behalf of itself and in the interest

of the public, and defendant, TAKAOKAYA, U.S.A., INC. (hereinafter referred to as "Defendant"), with each a Party to the action collectively referred to as "Parties."

1.2 Defendant and Products

- 1.2.1 Defendant is a California corporation which employs ten or more persons.Defendant distributes and sells Seaweed.
- 1.2.2 For purposes of this Consent Judgment, Defendant is deemed a person in the course of doing business in California and is subject to the provisions of the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, California Health & Safety Code §§ 25249.6 et seq. ("Proposition 65").

1.3 Chemicals of Concern

- 1.3.1 Lead and Lead Compounds (hereinafter "Lead") are known to the State of California to cause cancer and/or birth defects or other reproductive harm.
- 1.3.2 Cadmium and Cadmium Compounds (hereinafter "Cadmium") are known to the State of California to cause cancer and/or birth defects or other reproductive harm.
- 1.3.3 Inorganic Arsenic (hereinafter "Arsenic") is known to the State of California to cause cancer and/or birth defects or other reproductive harm.

1.4 Notices of Violation

- 1.4.1 On or about June 18, 2020, CAG served Defendant and various public enforcement agencies with a document entitled "60-Day Notice of Violation" (hereinafter "Notice 1") that provided the Defendant with notice of alleged violations of Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 for failing to warn individuals in California of exposures to Lead and Cadmium contained in Roasted Seaweed including but not limited to "Roasted Seaweed Yakisushinori"; "Half Cut"; "Net Weight 3.75 oz (105 g)"; "100 Sheets"; "Distributed by Takaokaya U.S.A., Inc." "7 35407 00006 2"; "Product of Korea" sold and/or distributed by Defendant. No other public enforcer has commenced or diligently prosecuted the allegations set forth in Notice 1.
- 1.4.2 On or about July 10, 2020, CAG served Defendant and various public enforcement agencies with a document entitled "60-Day Notice of Violation" (hereinafter

"Notice 2") that provided the Defendant with notice of alleged violations of Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 for failing to warn individuals in California of exposures to Arsenic and Cadmium contained in Roasted Seaweed including but not limited to "Hatsuzumi Temakinori"; "Takaokaya"; "Roasted Seaweed for Hand Roll"; "Net Wt. 0.75 oz. (21g) 20 Sheets"; "UPC 7 35407 00111 3" sold and/or distributed by Defendant. No other public enforcer has commenced or diligently prosecuted the allegations set forth in Notice 2.

- 1.4.3 On or about July 15, 2020, CAG served Defendant and various public enforcement agencies with a document entitled "60-Day Notice of Violation" (hereinafter "Notice 3") that provided the Defendant with notice of alleged violations of Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 for failing to warn individuals in California of exposures to Cadmium contained in Roasted Seaweed including but not limited to "Takaokaya"; "Yaki Sushi Nori"; "Sushihane"; "Roasted Seaweed"; "30 Full Sheets" "Net Wt. 2.25 oz/63g"; "UPC 7 35407 00108 3" sold and/or distributed by Defendant. No other public enforcer has commenced or diligently prosecuted the allegations set forth in Notice 3.
- 1.4.4 On or about July 22, 2020, CAG served Defendant and various public enforcement agencies with a document entitled "60-Day Notice of Violation" (hereinafter "Notice 4") that provided the Defendant with notice of alleged violations of Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 for failing to warn individuals in California of exposures to Cadmium contained in Roasted Seaweed including but not limited to "Takaokaya"; "Yakinori Tokusen"; "Roasted Seaweed"; "Net Wt. 0.75 oz/21g"; "UPC 735407 00107 6" sold and/or distributed by Defendant. No other public enforcer has commenced or diligently prosecuted the allegations set forth in Notice 4.
- 1.4.5 Notice 1, Notice 2, Notice 3 and Notice 4 are collectively referred to as the "Notices."
 - 1.4.6 "Covered Products" means "Roasted Seaweed" as described in the Notices above.

1.5 Complaint

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1.5.1 On October 8, 2020 CAG filed a complaint for civil penalties and injunctive relief in Los Angeles Superior Court, Case No. 20STCV38763 against Defendant. The initial Complaint alleges, among other things, that Defendant violated Proposition 65 by failing to give clear and reasonable warnings of exposure to Lead, Cadmium and Arsenic from Covered Products.

1.6 Consent to Jurisdiction

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

1.7 **No Admission**

1.7.1 This Consent Judgment resolves claims that are denied and disputed. The Parties enter into this Consent Judgment pursuant to a full and final settlement of any and all claims between the Parties for the purpose of avoiding prolonged litigation. Nothing in this Consent Judgment shall be construed as an admission by the Parties of any material allegation of the Complaint (each and every allegation of which Defendant denies), any fact, conclusion of law, issue of law or violation of law, including without limitation, any admission concerning any violation of Proposition 65 or any other statutory, regulatory, common law, or equitable doctrine, or the meaning of the terms "knowingly and intentionally expose" or "clear and reasonable warning" as used in Health and Safety Code section 25249.6. Nothing in this Consent Judgment, nor compliance with its terms, shall constitute or be construed as an admission by the Parties of any fact, conclusion of law, issue of law, or violation of law, or of fault, wrongdoing, or liability by any Defendant, its officers, directors, employees, or parent, subsidiary or affiliated corporations, or be offered or admitted as evidence in any administrative or judicial proceeding

or litigation in any court, agency, or forum. Furthermore, nothing in this Consent Judgment shall prejudice, waive or impair any right, remedy, argument, or defense the Parties may have in any other or future legal proceeding, except as expressly provided in this Consent Judgment.

2. **DEFINITIONS**

- 2.1 "Covered Products" means products specifically identified in Paragraph 1.2.1 sold or supplied by Defendant TAKAOKAYA, U.S.A., INC.
- 2.2 "Effective Date" means the date that this Consent Judgment is approved by the Court.
 - 2.3 "Lead" means Lead and Lead Compounds.
 - 2.4 "Cadmium" means Cadmium and Cadmium Compounds.
 - 2.5 "Arsenic" means Inorganic Arsenic.

3. INJUNCTIVE RELIEF / REFORMULATION / CLEAR AND REASONABLE WARNINGS.

- 3.1 After the Effective Date, Defendant shall not sell in California, offer for sale in California, or ship for sale in California any Covered Products unless the level of Lead does not exceed 75 parts per billion ("ppb") the level of Cadmium does not exceed 85 ppb, and the level of Arsenic does not exceed 15ppb, unless Proposition 65 compliant warnings are used as set forth in the following paragraphs.
- 3.2 For any Covered Products that exceeds their respective levels of Lead, Cadmium, and Arsenic that are placed into the stream of commerce in California after the Effective Date, Defendant must provide a Proposition 65 compliant warning for the Covered Products as set forth below. Any warning provided pursuant to this section shall be affixed to the packaging of, or directly on, the Covered Products, and be prominently placed with such conspicuousness as compared with other words, statements, designs, or devices as to render it likely to be read and understood by an ordinary individual under customary conditions before purchase or use. The warning must be set off from other surrounding information, enclosed in a box. Where the packaging of the Covered Product or a sign referring to the Covered Product includes consumer

information as defined by California Code of Regulations title 27 §25600.1(c) in a language other than English, the warning must also be provided in that language in addition to English. Should Defendant sell or distribute any Covered Product through the internet, the warning will be posted in the manner provided for with respect to internet sales, as provided for in 27 CCR sections 25601 and 25602, as they may be subsequently amended. The Parties agree that the following warning language shall constitute compliance with Proposition 65 with respect to the alleged Lead, Cadmium, and Arsenic in the Covered Products placed into the steam of commerce by Defendant after the Effective Date:

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

Or

WARNING: Consuming this product can expose you to Cadmium, a chemical known to the State of California to cause cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm. For more information go to www.P65Warnings.ca.gov/food.

Or

WARNING: Consuming this product can expose you to Inorganic Arsenic, a chemical known to the State of California to cause cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm. For more information go to www.P65Warnings.ca.gov/food.

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

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

4. SETTLEMENT PAYMENT

- 4.1 **Payment and Due Date**: Within ten (10) days of the Effective Date, Defendant shall pay a total of three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000.00) in full and complete settlement of all monetary claims by CAG related to the Notices, as follows:
- 4.1.1 **Civil Penalty**: Defendant shall issue separate checks totaling fifty-nine thousand four hundred and forty dollars (\$59,440.00) as penalties pursuant to Health & Safety Code § 25249.12:
- (a) Defendant will issue a check made payable to the State of California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment ("OEHHA") in the amount of forty-four thousand five hundred and eighty dollars (\$44,580.00) representing 75% of the total penalty and Defendant will issue a separate check to CAG in the amount of fourteen thousand eight hundred and sixty dollars (\$14,860.00) representing 25% of the total penalty; and
- (b) Separate 1099s shall be issued for each of the above payments:

 Defendant will issue a 1099 to OEHHA, P.O. Box 4010, Sacramento, CA 95184 (EIN: 68-0284486). Defendant will also issue a 1099 to CAG c/o Yeroushalmi & Yeroushalmi, 9100 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 240W, Beverly Hills, California 90212.
- 4.1.2 Additional Settlement Payments: Defendant shall make a separate payment, in the amount of forty thousand five hundred and sixty dollars (\$40,560.00) as an additional settlement payment to "Consumer Advocacy Group, Inc." pursuant to Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(b) and California Code of Regulations, Title 11 § 3203(d). Defendant will issue a separate check to CAG for the Additional Settlement Payment. CAG will use this payment as follows, eighty percent (80%) for fees of investigation, purchasing and testing for Proposition 65 listed chemicals in various products, and for expert fees for evaluating exposures through various mediums, including but not limited to consumer product, occupational, and environmental exposures to Proposition 65 listed chemicals, and the cost of hiring consulting and retaining

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experts who assist with the extensive scientific analysis necessary for those files in litigation and to offset the costs of future litigation enforcing Proposition 65 but excluding attorney fees; twenty percent (20%) for administrative costs incurred during investigation and litigation to reduce the public's exposure to Proposition 65 listed chemicals by notifying those persons and/or entities believed to be responsible for such exposures and attempting to persuade those persons and/or entities to reformulate their products or the source of exposure to completely eliminate or lower the level of Proposition 65 listed chemicals including but not limited to costs of documentation and tracking of products investigated, storage of products, website enhancement and maintenance, computer and software maintenance, investigative equipment, CAG's member's time for work done on investigations, office supplies, mailing supplies and postage. Within 30 days of a request from the Attorney General, CAG shall provide to the Attorney General copies of documentation demonstrating how the above funds have been spent. CAG shall be solely responsible for ensuring the proper expenditure of such additional settlement payment.

- Reimbursement of Attorneys Fees and Costs: Defendant shall pay two 4.1.3 hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000.00) to "Yeroushalmi & Yeroushalmi" as reimbursement for reasonable investigation fees and costs, attorneys' fees, and any other costs incurred as a result of investigating, bringing this matter to Defendant's attention, litigating, and negotiating a settlement in the public interest.
- 4.2 Other than the payment to OEHHA described above, all payments referenced in paragraphs 4.1.1, 4.1.2, and 4.1.3 above, shall be delivered to: Reuben Yeroushalmi, Yeroushalmi & Yeroushalmi, 9100 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 240W, Beverly Hills, CA 90212. The payment to OEHHA shall be delivered to Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, Attn: Mike Gyurics, 1001 I Street, Mail Stop 12-B, Sacramento, California 95812. Concurrently with payment to OEHHA, Defendant shall provide CAG with written confirmation that the payment to OEHHA was delivered.

5. MATTERS COVERED BY THIS CONSENT JUDGMENT

- 5.1 This Consent Judgment is a full, final, and binding resolution between CAG on behalf of itself and in the public interest and Defendant for failure to provide Proposition 65 warning of exposure to Lead, Cadmium, and Arsenic from the Covered Products as set forth in the Notices, and fully resolves all claims that have been or could have been asserted against Defendant in this action up through the Effective Date for failure to provide Proposition 65 warnings for the Covered Products regarding Lead, Cadmium, and Arsenic. CAG, on behalf of itself and in the public interest, hereby discharges Defendant, and their respective officers, directors, insurers, employees, parents, shareholders, divisions, subdivisions, subsidiaries, and their successors and assigns ("Defendant Releasees") and all customers, distributors, retailers, and downstream entities in the distribution chain of the Covered Products (including but not limited to Gaju Market Corporation dba California Marketplace), and the predecessors, successors and assigns of any of them, and all of their respective officers, directors, shareholders, members, managers, employees, agents only as to Covered Products sold by the Defendant (collectively, "Downstream Releasees"), for all Covered Products placed into the stream of commerce up through the Effective Date for violations of Proposition 65 based on exposure to Lead, Cadmium, and Arsenic from the Covered Products. Defendant's compliance with the terms of this Consent Judgment shall be deemed to constitute compliance with Proposition 65 regarding alleged exposures to Lead, Cadmium, and Arsenic from the Covered Products. Nothing in this Section affects CAG's right to commence or prosecute an action under Proposition 65 against any person other than Defendant Releasees or Downstream Releasees after the Effective Date. The scope of the released products is limited to Covered Products sold, supplied and/or distributed for sale by TAKAOKAYA, U.S.A., INC. only.
- 5.2 CAG on behalf of itself, its past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, successors, and/or assignees, hereby waives all rights to institute or participate in, directly or indirectly, any form of legal action and releases all claims, including, without limitation, all actions, and causes of action, in law or in equity, suits, liabilities, demands, obligations, damages, costs, fines, penalties, losses, or expenses (including, but not limited to, investigation

fees, expert fees, and attorneys' fees) of any nature whatsoever, whether known or unknown, fixed or contingent (collectively "Claims"), against the Released Parties arising from any violation of Proposition 65 or any other statutory or common law regarding the failure to warn about exposure to Lead, Cadmium, and Arsenic from the Covered Products. In furtherance of the foregoing, as to alleged exposures to Lead, Cadmium, and Arsenic from the Covered Products, CAG on behalf of itself only, hereby waives any and all rights and benefits which it now has, or in the future may have, conferred upon it with respect to Claims arising from any violation of Proposition 65 or any other statutory or common law regarding the failure to warn about exposure to Lead, Cadmium, and Arsenic from the Covered Products by virtue of the provisions of section 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.

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

negligence, or any other cause.

6. ENTRY OF CONSENT JUDGMENT

- 6.1 CAG shall file a motion seeking approval of this Consent Judgment pursuant to California Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(f). Upon entry of the Consent Judgment, CAG and Defendant waive their respective rights to a hearing or trial on the allegations of the Complaint.
- 6.2 The Parties shall make all reasonable efforts possible to have the Consent Judgment approved by the Court.
- 6.3 If this Consent Judgment is not approved in full by the Court, (a) this Consent Judgment and any and all prior agreements between the Parties merged herein shall terminate and become null and void, and the actions shall revert to the status that existed prior to the execution date of this Consent Judgment; (b) no term of this Consent Judgment or any draft thereof, or of the negotiation, documentation, or other part or aspect of the Parties' settlement discussions, shall have any effect, nor shall any such matter be admissible in evidence for any purpose in this Action, or in any other proceeding; and (c) the Parties agree to meet and confer to determine whether to modify the terms of the Consent Judgment and to resubmit it for approval.

7. MODIFICATION OF JUDGMENT

- 7.1 This Consent Judgment may be modified only upon written agreement of the Parties and upon entry of a modified Consent Judgment by the Court thereon, or upon motion of any party as provided by law and upon entry of a modified Consent Judgment by the Court.
- 7.2 Any Party seeking to modify this Consent Judgment shall attempt in good faith to meet and confer with the other Party prior to filing a motion to modify the Consent Judgment.

8. RETENTION OF JURISDICTION

- 8.1 This Court shall retain jurisdiction of this matter to implement and enforce the terms of this Consent Judgment under Code of Civil Procedure § 664.6.
- 8.2 In any proceeding brought by either Party to enforce this Consent Judgment, the prevailing party shall be entitled to recover its reasonable attorney's fees and costs.

10. DUTIES LIMITED TO CALIFORNIA

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

10. SERVICE ON THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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

11. ATTORNEY FEES

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

12. GOVERNING LAW

- 12.1 The validity, construction and performance of this Consent Judgment shall be governed by the laws of the State of California, without reference to any conflicts of law provisions of California law.
- 12.2 The terms of this Consent Judgment shall be governed by the laws of the State of California. In the event that Proposition 65 is amended, repealed, preempted, or is otherwise rendered inapplicable by reason of law generally, or if any of the provisions of this Consent Judgment are rendered inapplicable or are no longer required as a result of any such amendment, repeal or preemption, or rendered inapplicable by reason of law generally as to the Covered Products, then any Defendant subject to this Consent Judgment may provide written notice to CAG of any asserted change in the law, and shall have no further obligations pursuant to this Consent Judgment with respect to, and to the extent that, the Covered Products are so affected. Nothing in this Consent Judgment shall be interpreted to relieve a Defendant from any obligation to comply with any pertinent state or federal law or regulation.

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

13. EXECUTION AND COUNTERPARTS

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

14. **NOTICES**

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

If to CAG:

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

If to Defendant.: George Salmas george.salmas@thefoodlawyers.com Michael R. Hambly michael.hambly@thefoodlawyers.com THE FOOD LAWYERS

1880 Century Park East, Suite 611

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AGREED TO:

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.

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AGREED TO:

Each signatory to this Consent Judgment certifies that he or she is fully authorized

Date: 6/2, 2023

Name: Hirochika Tsuido

Title: President

TAKAOKAYA, U.S.A., INC.

IT IS SO ORDERED. Ú|æájcã-ÁţÁţãç^Á¸[cã&^È

CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC.

Date: 06/15/2023



Maurice A. Leiter

JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

Maurice A. Leiter / Judge