

# 60-DAY NOTICE OF VIOLATION

SENT IN COMPLIANCE WITH CALIFORNIA HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 25249.7(d)

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**DATE:** June 28, 2024

**TO:** Kathy Phillips - President - Primitives by Kathy, Inc.;  
Current Owner, Davis Ace Hardware;  
John Venhuizen, CEO - Ace Hardware Corporation;  
California Attorney General's Office;  
District Attorney's Office for 58 Counties; and  
City Attorneys for San Francisco, San Diego, San Jose, Sacramento and Los Angeles

**FROM:** Susan Davia

**RE:** Primitives by Kathy Luggage Tag with vinyl window

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## I. INTRODUCTION

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My name is Susan Davia. I am a citizen of the State of California acting in the interest of the general public. I seek to promote awareness of exposures to toxic chemicals in products sold in California and, if possible, to improve human health by reducing hazardous substances contained in such items. This Notice is provided to the public agencies listed above pursuant to California Health & Safety Code § 25249.6 *et seq.* ("Proposition 65"). As noted above, notice is also being provided to the alleged violators, Primitives by Kathy, Inc., Davis Ace Hardware and Ace Hardware Corporation (collectively, "Violator"). The violations covered by this Notice consist of the product exposures, routes of exposure, and types of harm potentially resulting from exposure to the toxic chemical ("listed chemical") identified below, as follows:

Product Exposure:	See Section VII. Exhibit A
Listed Chemical:	Di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate (DEHP)
Routes of Exposure:	Inhalation, Ingestion, Dermal
Types of Harm:	Cancer, Birth Defects and other Reproductive Harm

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## II. NATURE OF ALLEGED VIOLATION (PRODUCT EXPOSURE)

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The specific types of products that are causing consumer exposures in violation of Proposition 65, and that are covered by this Notice, are listed under "Product Category/Type" in Exhibit A in Section VII below. All products within the type covered by this Notice shall be referred to hereinafter as "products." The sales of these products in California dating at least as far back as June 2022, are subject to this Notice. As a result of the sales of these products, exposures to each identified listed chemical have been occurring without clear and reasonable warnings as required by Proposition 65. Without proper warnings regarding the toxic effects of exposure to the listed chemical resulting from contact with the products, California citizens lack the information necessary to make informed decisions on whether and how to eliminate (or reduce) the risk of exposure to the toxic chemical from the reasonably foreseeable use of the products.

## CONSUMER PRODUCT EXPOSURE

California citizens, through the act of buying, acquiring or utilizing the products, are exposed to the identified listed chemical(s). As the product naturally degrades through repeat manipulation and exposure to heat, airflow, light radiation, etc., the listed chemical diffuses to and collects on the surface of the product. Children, men and women (especially those of childbearing age) are exposed to the listed chemical through direct dermal contact when they, among other activities, handle or touch the products during packing, unpacking and use or otherwise come into direct dermal contact during use of the products. Children, men and women (especially those of childbearing age) ingest the listed chemical when they transfer the listed chemical from the products to their mouths through hand-to-mouth activities that may continue to occur for a significant period after contact with the products stops. This hand-to-mouth activity may come directly from the hand or indirectly through hand contact with another item (such as a food item, cigarette or writing device) that is then ingested or placed in the mouth. Children, men and women (especially those of childbearing age) will also directly ingest the listed chemical anytime they place the soft vinyl components of the products directly in their mouths to hold or otherwise mouth the product. Children, men and women (especially those of childbearing age) will additionally suffer dermal absorption exposure to the product as a result of direct contact between the product and skin during product handling and use. Children, men and women (especially those of childbearing age) will also suffer inhalation exposure to the listed chemical as it evaporates from the product surface into the air/gas phase.

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## III. CONTACT INFORMATION

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Please direct all questions concerning this notice to me through my counsel's office at the following address:

Susan Davia  
c/o Gregory Sheffer, Esq.  
Sheffer Law Firm  
232 E. Blithedale Avenue, Suite 210  
Mill Valley, CA 94941  
gregs@sheffer-law.net  
415-388-0911

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## IV. PROPOSITION 65 INFORMATION

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For general information concerning the provisions of Proposition 65, please feel free to contact the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment's ("OEHHA") Proposition 65 Implementation Office at (916) 445-6900. For the Violator's reference, I have attached a copy of "Proposition 65: A Summary" which has been prepared by OEHHA.

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## V. RESOLUTION OF NOTICED CLAIMS

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Based on the allegations set forth in this Notice, I intend to file a citizen enforcement lawsuit against the alleged Violator unless such Violator enters into a binding written agreement to: (1) recall products already sold or undertake best efforts to ensure that the requisite health hazard warnings are provided to those who have received such products; (2) provide clear and reasonable warnings for products sold in the future or reformulate such products to eliminate the listed chemical exposures; and (3) pay an appropriate civil penalty based on the factors enumerated in California Health & Safety Code § 25249.7 (b). If the alleged Violator is interested in resolving this dispute without resorting to time-consuming and expensive litigation, please feel free to contact my counsel identified in Section III above. It should be

noted that neither my counsel nor I can: (1) finalize any settlement until after the 60-day notice period has expired; nor (2) speak for the Attorney General or any District or City Attorney who received this Notice. Therefore, while reaching an agreement with me will resolve my claims, such agreement may not satisfy the public prosecutors.

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## VI. ADDITIONAL NOTICE INFORMATION

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Identified below is a specific example of a product recently purchased and witnessed as being available for purchase or use in California that is within the category or type of offending product covered by this Notice. Based on publicly available information, the retailers, distributors and/or manufacturers of the examples within the categories or types of product are also provided below. I believe and allege that the sale of the offending products also has occurred without the requisite Proposition 65 "clear and reasonable warnings" at one or more locations and/or via other means including, but not limited to, transactions made over-the-counter, business-to-business, through the internet and/or via a catalog by the Violator and other retailers and distributors of the manufacturer.

Product*	Retailer	Manufacturer/Distributor
Primitives by Kathy Luggage Tag with vinyl window	Ace Hardware	Primitives by Kathy, Inc.

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## VII. EXHIBIT A

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Product Category/Type	Such As*	Toxins
Primitives by Kathy Luggage Tag with vinyl window	Not Your Bag	DEHP

\*The specifically identified example of the category or type of product that is subject to this Notice is for the recipient's benefit to assist in its investigation of, among other things, the magnitude of potential exposure to the listed chemical from other items within the product category/type listed in Exhibit A. *It is important to note that this example is not meant to be an exhaustive or comprehensive identification of each specific offending product of the type listed under "Product Category/Type" in Exhibit A.* Further, it is this citizen's position that the alleged Violator is obligated to continue to conduct in good faith an investigation into other specific products within the type or category described above that may have been manufactured, distributed, sold, shipped, stored (or otherwise within the notice recipient's custody or control) during the relevant period so as to ensure that the requisite toxic warnings were and are provided to California citizens prior to purchase.

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## VIII. DEMAND TO PRESERVE EVIDENCE

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Please also accept this Notice as formal demand that the Violators preserve - in the same manner and form as created, prepared and as completed - all witness statements, diagrams, pictures, videotapes, sketches, reports, or other documentation regarding this claim or the facts, circumstances or other information surrounding this claim. Please preserve all documents relating to the products and exemplars that are identified herein and the subject of this Notice. Please preserve all electronic mail communications regarding or relating to the products, product testing and Proposition 65 compliance attempts and all electronically stored data that depicts, describes or otherwise relates to the subject Notice, the claims contained herein and related information. Please preserve all documents related to the products, packaging and design, including all correspondence relating to Proposition 65, phthalate content of the products and chemical warnings. Please preserve all documentation relating to the

purchase and receipt of the Noticed products, as well as the further sale and delivery of the products, including all sales correspondence, purchase orders, shipping orders, invoices, vendor purchase agreements, etc. Please preserve all inventory control information and documentation relating to the products and the amount of each product in your possession from your original receipt until your final sale, distribution or disposal. Please understand this demand is comprehensive and relates to all documentation and information regarding the products, Proposition 65 and phthalates. Please understand that these requests are intended to include, but not be limited to, all documents or other "writings" as that term is defined by Evidence Code Section 250. Please preserve a minimum of 5 examples of each style of each noticed product type and exemplar identified in Section VII. Recipient may suffer adverse consequences if you choose to ignore this request to preserve evidence. Destruction of evidence *in anticipation of a discovery request* "would surely be a misuse of discovery within the meaning of Code of Civil Procedure section 2023" thereby exposing that party to a wide range of sanctions, including default and dismissal. (*Cedars Sinai Med. Ctr. v. Sup.Ct. (Bowyer)* (1998) 18 Cal.4<sup>th</sup> 1, 12.)

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**IX. DEMAND FOR RETAILER TO IDENTIFY MANUFACTURER, PRODUCER, PACKAGER, IMPORTER, SUPPLIER, AND DISTRIBUTOR**

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Pursuant to 27 C.C.R. 25600.2(g), "[t]he retail seller of a product that may cause a consumer product exposure shall promptly provide the name and contact information for the manufacturer, producer, packager, importer, supplier, and distributor of the product to ... [a]ny person who has served notice under Section 25249.7(d)(1) of the Act alleging that the consumer product causes an exposure that requires a warning under the Act." This notice includes both the description of the specific product type that is subject to this notice as well as one or more specific examples of the product in Section VII.

*Please accept this Notice as a formal demand for any non-manufacturing seller or distributor receiving this notice to promptly provide the name and contact information for the manufacturer, producer, packager, importer, supplier, and distributor of the product(s) so identified.* This information may and should be communicated on a letter from the retailer delivered via electronic mail to my counsel as indicated in Section III of this notice.

# CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

Health and Safety Code Section 25249.7(d)

I, Gregory M. Sheffer, hereby declare:

1. This Certificate of Merit accompanies the attached sixty-day notice in which it is alleged that the party identified in the notice has violated Health and Safety Code § 25249.6 by failing to provide clear and reasonable warnings.
2. I am the attorney for the noticing party.
3. I have consulted with one or more persons with relevant and appropriate experience or expertise who has reviewed facts, studies, or other data regarding the alleged exposure to the listed chemical that is the subject of this action
4. Based on the information obtained through those consultations, and on all other information in my possession, I believe there is a reasonable and meritorious case for the private action. I understand that "reasonable and meritorious case for the private action" means that the information provides a credible basis that all elements of the plaintiff's case can be established and the information did not prove that the alleged Violator will be able to establish any of the affirmative defenses set forth in the statute.
5. The copy of this Certificate of Merit served on the Attorney General attaches to it factual information sufficient to establish the basis for this certificate, including information identified in Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(h)(2) (*i.e.*, (1) the identity of the persons consulted with and relied on by the certifier, and (2) the facts, studies, or other data reviewed by those persons).

Dated: June 28, 2024

Sheffer Law Firm



Gregory M. Sheffer

**PROOF OF SERVICE**

I am employed in the County of Marin, State of California. I am a citizen of the United States, over the age of 18 years, and not a party to the within action. My business address is 232 E. Blithedale Ave., Suite 210, Mill Valley, CA 94941.

On the date indicated below, I served the following documents, described as:

**60-DAY NOTICE OF VIOLATION SENT IN COMPLIANCE WITH HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 25249.7(d);**

**PROPOSITION 65: A SUMMARY (SERVED ONLY ON THE NOTICED VIOLATORS);**

**CERTIFICATE OF MERIT; AND**

**CERTIFICATE OF MERIT ATTACHMENTS (SERVED ONLY ON THE ATTORNEY GENERAL)**

(1) on each entity or other mandatory recipient listed below with a complete postal mailing address by placing a true and correct copy of the foregoing document(s) in a sealed envelope addressed to each interested party as set forth hereafter and depositing each such envelope, with postage thereon fully prepaid, for collection and mailing with the United States Postal Service or agent authorized to accept mail on behalf of the United States Postal Service and (2) on each entity or other mandatory recipient listed below with an electronic mail address by electronically mailing PDF copies of the foregoing documents to them at such designated electronic address (with delivery confirmation requested and without receiving any unresolved return message of failed delivery).

Kathy Phillips - President Primitives by Kathy, Inc. 1817 William Penn Way Lancaster, PA 17601	Kathy Phillips - President Primitives by Kathy, Inc. PO Box 5555 Lancaster PA 17606-5555	John Venhuizen - CEO Ace Hardware Corporation 2200 Kensington Court Oak Brook, IL 60523
The District Attorney for Each of the 58 counties in California <i>(see attached list of addresses)</i>	The City Attorney for Los Angeles, San Diego, San Jose, San Francisco and Sacramento <i>(see attached list of addresses)</i>	Current owner Davis Ace Hardware 815 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street Davis, CA 95616

I also caused to be served the same documents on the Attorney General of the State of California by electronically uploading a copy to the California Attorney General’s Website at <https://oag.ca.gov/prop65/add-60-day-notice>,

Executed this 28<sup>th</sup> day of June 2024, at Mill Valley, California. I declare under the penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Heidi Boissonneau

**SERVICE LIST**

The Honorable Pamela Y Price  
Alameda County District Attorney  
[CEPDProp65@acgov.org](mailto:CEPDProp65@acgov.org)

The Honorable Michael Atwell  
Alpine County District Attorney  
PO BOX 248  
Markleeville, CA 96120

The Honorable Todd Riebe  
Amador County District Attorney  
708 Court Street  
Jackson, CA 95642

The Honorable Michael Ramsey  
Butte County District Attorney  
25 County Center Drive  
Oroville, CA 95965

The Honorable Barbara Yook  
Calaveras County District Attorney  
[Prop65Env@co.calaveras.ca.us](mailto:Prop65Env@co.calaveras.ca.us)

The Honorable Mathew Beauchamp  
Colusa County District Attorney  
310 Sixth Street  
Colusa, CA 95932

The Honorable Stacey Grassini, DDA  
Contra Costa County Dist. Attorney  
[sgrassini@contracosta.da.org](mailto:sgrassini@contracosta.da.org)

The Honorable Dale Trigg  
Del Norte County District Attorney  
450 H Street, Room 171  
Crescent City, CA 95531

The Honorable James Clinchard  
El Dorado County ADAttorney  
[EDCDAPROP65@edcda.us](mailto:EDCDAPROP65@edcda.us)

The Honorable Lisa Smittcamp  
Fresno County District Attorney  
[consumerprotection@fresnocountyca.gov](mailto:consumerprotection@fresnocountyca.gov)

The Honorable Dwayne Stewart  
Glenn County District Attorney  
P.O. Box 430  
Willows, CA 95988

The Honorable Maggie Fleming  
Humboldt County District Attorney  
825 5th Street, Fourth Floor  
Eureka, CA 95501

The Honorable Gilbert Otero  
Imperial County District Attorney  
940 West Main Street, Suite 102  
El Centro, CA 92243

The Honorable Thomas Hardy  
Inyo County District Attorney  
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The Honorable Cynthia Zimmer  
Kern County District Attorney  
1215 Truxtun Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> Fl.  
Bakersfield, CA 93301

The Honorable Keith Fagundes  
Kings County District Attorney  
1400 West Lacey Boulevard  
Hanford, CA 93230

The Honorable Susan Kronen  
Lake County District Attorney  
255 North Forbes Street  
Lakeport, CA 95453

The Honorable Stacey Montgomery  
Lassen County District Attorney

c/o Devin Chandler  
[dchandler@co.lassen.ca.gov](mailto:dchandler@co.lassen.ca.gov)  
The Honorable George Gascon  
Los Angeles County Dist. Attorney  
211 West Temple Street, Suite 1200  
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The Honorable Sally Moreno  
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The Honorable Lori Frugoli  
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The Honorable Walter W. Wall  
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The Honorable Kimberly Lewis  
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The Honorable Cynthia Campbell  
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204 S. Court Street, Suite 202  
Alturas, CA 96101

The Honorable Tim Kendall  
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The Honorable Jeannine Paccioni  
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The Honorable Jason Anderson  
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Honorable Henry Lifton, DCA  
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The Honorable Tori Verber Salazar  
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The Honorable Eric Dobroth  
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The Honorable Stephen Wagstaffe  
San Mateo County District Attorney  
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The Honorable Joyce Dudley  
Santa Barbara County Dist. Attorney  
c/o Christopher Dalby, DDA  
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Nora Frimman, City Atty.  
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The Honorable Bud Porter  
Supervising Deputy District Attorney  
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The Honorable Jeff Rosell  
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The Honorable Stephanie Bridgett  
Shasta County District Attorney  
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The Honorable Sandra Groven  
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Downsville, CA 95936

The Honorable James Kirk Andrus  
Siskiyou County District Attorney  
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Yreka, CA 96097

The Honorable Kristina Abrams  
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The Honorable Jill Ravitch  
Sonoma County District Attorney  
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The Honorable Matt Rogers

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The Honorable David Brady  
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Office of the California Attorney General  
Proposition 65 Enforcement Reporting  
Via Electronic filing  
<https://oag.ca.gov/prop65/add-60-day-notice>