

**SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**  
**BETWEEN**  
**CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC.**  
**AND**  
**BIG LOTS STORES, INC.**

Consumer Advocacy Group, Inc. ("CAG") and Big Lots Stores, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as "Big Lots"), (CAG and Big Lots are collectively referred to as, the "Parties") enter into this agreement ("Settlement Agreement") to settle CAG's allegations that Big Lots violated Proposition 65 for the purpose of avoiding prolonged and costly litigation. The effective date of this Settlement Agreement shall be the date upon which it is fully executed by all Parties hereto (the "Effective Date").

**1.0** **Introduction**

1.1 CAG is a California-based entity that seeks to promote awareness of exposures to toxic chemicals and improve human health by reducing or eliminating hazardous substances contained in consumer and industrial products.

1.2 Big Lots previously sold, at various times a decorative light set, identified as the "Wilson & Fisher Deluxe Grape Cluster Light Set, Purple-Green Mix, 150 Lights, V#266450, Item #P5907" (referred to throughout as the "Covered Products").

1.3 CAG alleges that Covered Products contain Di (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP), also known as Diethyl Hexyl Phthalate and Bis (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate, and Di-n-Butyl Phthalate (DBP) and that Big Lots did not provide a required warning in compliance with the California Safe Drinking Water and Toxic

Enforcement Act (*Cal. Health & Safety Code § 25249.5, et se* (“Proposition 65”)).

1.4□ On January 1, 1988, the Governor of California added DEHP to the list of chemicals known to the State to cause cancer, and on October 24, 2003, the Governor added DEHP to the list of chemicals known to the State to cause developmental male reproductive toxicity. These additions took place more than twenty (20) months before CAG served its “Sixty-Day Notice of Intent To Sue For Violations Of The Safe Drinking Water And Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986” which is further described below.

1.5□ On December 2, 2005, the Governor of California added DBP to the list of chemicals known to the State to cause developmental, female, and male reproductive toxicity. This addition took place more than twenty (20) months before CAG served its “Sixty-Day Notice of Intent To Sue For Violations Of The Safe Drinking Water And Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986” which is further described below.

1.6□ DEHP and DBP are referred to hereafter as the “Listed Chemicals.”

1.7□ On or about July 27, 2012, CAG served Big Lots Stores, Inc.; Big Lots, Inc.; Consolidated Property Holdings, Inc. and certain relevant public enforcement agencies with documents entitled “Sixty-Day Notice Of Intent To Sue For Violations Of The Safe Drinking Water And Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986” regarding Covered Products containing the Listed Chemicals.

1.8□ The Sixty-Day Notice (referred to as “Notice”) alleged that Big Lots and the other noticed parties violated Proposition 65 by failing to warn consumers

in California that use of Covered Products exposes persons to the Listed Chemicals.

1.9□ The Parties enter into this Settlement Agreement to settle disputed claims between the Parties as set forth below concerning the Parties' and the Covered Products' compliance with Proposition 65 (the "Dispute").

1.10□ By execution of this Settlement Agreement, the Parties do not admit any facts or conclusions of law, including, but not limited to, any facts or conclusions of law regarding any violation of Proposition 65, or any other statutory, regulatory, common law, or equitable doctrine. Nothing in this Settlement Agreement shall be construed as an admission by the Parties of any fact, conclusion of law, issue of law, or violation of law. Nothing in this Settlement Agreement, nor compliance with its terms, shall constitute or be construed, considered, offered, or admitted as evidence of an admission or evidence of fault, wrongdoing, or liability by Big Lots, its officers, directors, employees, or parents, subsidiaries or affiliated corporations including but not limited to Big Lots, Inc and Consolidated Property Holdings, Inc. in any administrative or judicial proceeding or litigation in any court, agency, or forum. Except for the allegations settled and compromised, nothing in this Settlement Agreement shall prejudice, waive, or impair any right, remedy, argument, or defense that CAG or Big Lots may have against one another in any other pending legal proceeding as to allegations unrelated to the Dispute or claims released herein.

**2.0□ Release**

This Settlement Agreement is a full, final, and binding resolution between CAG, on the one hand, and (a) Big Lots, and Big Lots' owners, parents, subsidiaries, affiliates, sister and related companies, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, insurers, attorneys, predecessors, successors, and assigns, including, but not limited to, Big Lots, Inc. and Consolidated Property Holdings, Inc. (collectively "Releasees") and (b) all entities to whom Releasees directly or indirectly provide, distribute or sell the Covered Products, including but not limited to Big Lots', distributors, wholesalers, customers, retailers, franchisees, cooperative members, and licensees, ("Downstream Releasees"), on the other hand, of any violation or claimed violation of Proposition 65 or any statutory or common law claim that has been or could have been asserted against the Releasees and Downstream Releasees regarding exposing persons to the Listed Chemicals and the failure to warn about exposure to the Listed Chemicals arising only in connection with the Covered Products manufactured, shipped and/or otherwise distributed prior to the Effective Date, even if sold by Downstream Releasees after the Effective Date. The Covered Products are only limited to those sold by Big Lots. CAG and Big Lots' agree that Big Lots' compliance with this Settlement Agreement shall constitute compliance with Proposition 65 with respect to the Listed Chemicals in the Covered Products for both Releasees and Downstream Releasees for any Covered Products distributed and/or sold by Releasees or Downstream Releasees after the Effective Date.

CAG, its past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, successors, and/or assignees, hereby waives and releases with respect to the Covered Products all

rights to institute or participate in, directly or indirectly, any form of legal action, 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) (collectively "Claims"), against Releasees and/or Downstream Releasees that arise under Proposition 65 or any other statutory or common law claims that were or could have been asserted, only to the extent that such claims relate to Releasees' and/or Downstream Releasees' alleged exposure of persons to the Listed Chemicals contained in the Covered Products or any failure by Releasees and Downstream Releasees to warn about exposures to the Listed Chemicals contained in the Covered Products.

CAG acknowledges that it is familiar with Section 1542 of Civil Code, which provides as follows:

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

CAG, its past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, successors, and/or assignees expressly waives and relinquishes any and all rights and benefits which it may have under, or which may be conferred on it by the provisions of Civil Code § 1542 as well as under any other state or federal statute or common law

principle of similar effect, to the fullest extent that it may lawfully waive such rights or benefits pertaining to the released matters.

**3.0 Big Lot's Duties**

3.1 Big Lots agrees that within 60 days of the Effective Date, it will not sell Covered Products in California that have not been reformulated to a point where the level of DEHP and DBP in the Covered Products does not exceed 0.1%.

3.2 Payments - Big Lots agrees, to pay a total of thirty-three thousand dollars (\$33,000.00) within twenty (20) days of the Effective Date by separate checks apportioned as follows:

3.2.1 Payment to CAG: Two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) shall be paid to Consumer Advocacy Group, Inc. The check shall be delivered to: Reuben Yeroushalmi, Yeroushalmi & Associates, 9100 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 240W, Beverly Hills, California 90212. By the Effective Date, CAG shall provide Big Lots with CAG's Employer Identification Number.

3.2.2 Attorneys' Fees and Costs: Thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000.00) of such payment shall be paid to Yeroushalmi & Associates, as CAG's attorneys, for reasonable investigation fees and costs, attorneys' fees, and any other costs incurred as a result of investigating and bringing this matter to Big Lots' attention. The check shall be delivered to: Reuben Yeroushalmi, Yeroushalmi & Associates, 9100 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 240W, Beverly Hills, California 90212. By the Effective Date,

Yeroushalmi & Associates shall provide Big Lots with its Employer Identification Number.

3.2.3 Penalty: Big Lots shall issue two separate checks for a total amount of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) as penalties pursuant to Health & Safety Code § 25249.12: (a) one check made payable to the State of California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) in the amount of seven hundred and fifty dollars (\$750), representing 75% of the total penalty; and (b) one check to Consumer Advocacy Group, Inc. in the amount of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250), representing 25% of the total penalty. Both checks shall be delivered to: Yeroushalmi & Associates, 9100 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 240W, Beverly Hills, California 90212. Two separate 1099s shall be issued for the above payments: The first 1099 shall be issued to OEHHA, P.O. Box 4010, Sacramento, CA 95184 (EIN: 68-0284486) in the amount of \$750. The second 1099 shall be issued in the amount of \$250 to CAG and delivered to: Yeroushalmi & Associates, 9100 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 240W, Beverly Hills, California 90212.

4.0  **Authority to Enter Into Settlement Agreement**

4.1  CAG represents that its signatory to this Settlement Agreement has full authority to enter into and legally bind CAG to this Settlement Agreement.

4.2  Big Lots represents that its signatory to this Settlement Agreement has full authority to enter into and legally bind Big Lots to this Settlement Agreement.

5.0  **Report of the Settlement Agreement to the Office of the Attorney General of California**

5.1  CAG shall report this Settlement Agreement to the Attorney General's Office within five (5) days of the Parties' execution of this Settlement Agreement.

6.0  **Execution in Counterparts and Facsimile**

6.1  This Settlement Agreement may be executed in counterparts, which taken together shall be deemed to constitute the same document. A facsimile or portable document format (PDF) signature shall be as valid as the original.

7.0  **Entire Agreement**

7.1  This Settlement Agreement contains the sole and entire agreement and understanding of the Parties with respect to the entire subject matter hereof, and all related prior discussions, negotiations, commitments, and understandings. No other agreements, oral or otherwise, exist to bind any of the Parties.

8.0  **Modification of Settlement Agreement**

8.1  Any modification to this Settlement Agreement shall be in writing and signed by the Parties.

9.0  **Application of Settlement Agreement**

9.1  This Settlement Agreement shall apply to, be binding upon, and inure to the benefit of, CAG and the Releasees and Downstream Releasees identified in Section 2 above.

10.0  **Enforcement of Settlement Agreement**

10.1  Any party may file suit before the Superior Court of the County of Los Angeles, consistent with the terms and conditions set forth in paragraphs 10.2 and



10.3 of this Settlement Agreement, to enforce the terms and conditions contained in this Settlement Agreement. The prevailing party shall be entitled to its reasonable attorneys' fees and costs associated with such enforcement.

10.2□ No action to enforce this Settlement Agreement may be commenced or maintained, and no notice of violation related to the Covered Products may be served or filed against Big Lots by CAG, unless the party seeking enforcement or alleging violation notifies the other party of the specific acts alleged to breach this Settlement Agreement at least 90 days before serving or filing any action or Notice of Violation and the entity receiving the notice fails to comply with the requirements set forth in Section 10.3 below. Any notice to Big Lots must contain (a) the name of the product, (b) specific dates when the product was sold after the Effective Date in California without reformulation, (c) the store or other place at which the product was available for sale to consumers, and (d) any other evidence or other support for the allegations in the notice.

10.3□ Within 30 days of receiving the notice described in Section 10.2, Big Lots shall either (1) send the store or other place at which the product was available for sale to the public a letter directing that the offending product be immediately removed from inventory and returned to Big Lots for full credit, including shipping costs, or (2) refute the information provided under Section 10.2. Should the parties be unable to resolve the dispute, any party may seek relief under Section 10.1.

**11.0 Notification Requirements**

11.1 Any notice required or permitted hereunder shall be effective only if given in writing and delivered in person, certified or registered mail return receipt requested, or traceable overnight delivery service, to the following designees:

For CAG:

Reuben Yeroushalmi  
YEROUSHALMI & ASSOCIATES  
9100 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 240W  
Beverly Hills, CA 90212

For Big Lots:  
Big Lots Stores, Inc.  
300 Philipi Road  
Columbus, OH 43228

With a copy to:

Michael Delehunt  
FOLEY LARDNER LLP  
555 California St., Suite 1700  
San Francisco, CA 94104

Any party may change its designee(s) for purposes of notification by providing written notice of such change pursuant to this section.

**12.0 SEVERABILITY**

12.1 If, subsequent to the execution of this Settlement Agreement, any of the provisions of this Settlement Agreement are held by a court to be unenforceable, the validity of the enforceable provisions remaining shall not be adversely affected.

**13.0 GOVERNING LAW**

13.1 The terms of this Settlement Agreement 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, preempted or is otherwise rendered inapplicable by reason of law generally, or as to the Listed Chemical and/or the Covered Products, then Big Lots shall provide written notice to CAG of any asserted change in the law, and shall have no further obligations pursuant to this Settlement Agreement with respect to, and to the extent that, the Covered Products are so affected.

**CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUP, INC.**

Dated: 6-18-14

By: 

Printed Name: Michel Sassoon

Title: Executive director

**BIG LOTS STORES, INC.**

Dated: 6-17-14

By: 

Printed Name: Ron Parisotto

Title: SVP, General Counsel and  
Corporate Secretary

