

SETTLEMENT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Ecological Alliance, LLC and True Value Company

This Settlement Agreement is entered into by and between Ecological Alliance, LLC (“Ecological”), on the one hand, and True Value Company (“True Value”), with Ecological and True Value collectively referred to as the “Parties.” Ecological is a California limited liability company seeking to promote awareness of exposures to toxic chemicals and improve human health by reducing or eliminating hazardous substances contained in consumer products. Ecological contends that True Value is a company in the course of doing business for purposes of Proposition 65.

1.2 General Allegations

Ecological alleges that True Value manufactured, distributed, and/or sold in the State of California Brass Locks, Hose & Adapters, and Tee Connectors containing lead and that such sales have not included warnings pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, California Health & Safety Code sections 25249.6 *et seq.* (“Proposition 65”). Lead is listed under Proposition 65 as a chemical known to the State of California to cause birth defects or other reproductive harm.

1.3 Product Description

The products that are covered by this Settlement Agreement are defined as Brass Locks, Hose & Adapters, and Tee Connectors containing lead. All such items shall be referred to herein as the “Products.”

1.4 Notices of Violation

On June 2, 2015, November 18, 2015, and December 20, 2015, Ecological served True Value and all public enforcement agencies eligible to initiate Proposition 65 actions on behalf of the People of the State of California with a document entitled “60-Day Notice of Violation” (the “Notice”) that provided True Value and such public enforcers with notice that alleged that True Value was in violation of California Health & Safety Code section 25249.6 for failing to warn consumers and customers that the Products exposed users in California to lead. No public enforcer has diligently prosecuted the allegations set forth in the Notice.

1.5 No Admission

True Value denies the material factual and legal allegations contained in Ecological’s Notice and maintains that all products that it has sold and distributed in California, including the Products, have been and are in compliance with Proposition 65 and all other applicable laws. Nothing in this Settlement Agreement shall be construed as an admission by True Value of any fact, finding, issue of law, or violation of law; nor shall compliance with this Settlement Agreement constitute or be construed as an admission by True Value of any fact, finding, conclusion, issue of law, or violation of law, such being specifically denied by True Value. However, this section shall not diminish or otherwise affect the obligations, responsibilities, and duties of True Value under this Settlement Agreement.

1.6 Effective Date

For purposes of this Settlement Agreement, the term “Effective Date” shall mean 180 days after the date this Settlement Agreement is fully executed.

2. INJUNCTIVE RELIEF: WARNINGS AND REFORMULATION

2.1 Reformulation Option

The Products shall be deemed to comply with Proposition 65 with regard to lead and be exempt from any Proposition 65 warning requirements for lead if the Products do not exceed the following limits for lead: 100 ppm by weight for any accessible component part. For purposes of this Settlement Agreement, accessible component part shall mean components of the Product to which a person would be exposed to lead by direct contact during normal use of the Product.

2.2 Warning Alternative

Products that do not meet the warning exemption standard set forth in Section 2.1 above shall be accompanied by a warning as described in Section 2.3 below. The warning requirements set forth in Section 2.3 below shall apply only to Products that True Value manufactures, assembles, distributes, supplies, sells or procures after the Effective Date that are distributed, marketed, sold or shipped for sale in the State of California. The warning requirement shall not apply to Products that are already in the stream of commerce as of the Effective Date.

2.3 Warning Language

Where required under Sections 2.1 and 2.2 above, True Value shall provide Proposition 65 warnings as follows:

- (a) True Value may use either of the following warning statements:
 - (1) **WARNING:** This product contains a chemical known to the State of California to cause birth defects or other reproductive harm.
or, where True Value has reason to believe that chemicals listed under Proposition 65 in addition to lead are present in a Product,

WARNING: This product contains one or more chemicals, including lead, known to the State of California to cause cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm.
- (b) The requirements for warnings, set forth in subsection (a) above are imposed pursuant to the terms of this Settlement Agreement. The Parties

recognize that these are not the exclusive methods of providing a warning under Proposition 65 and its implementing regulations.

(c) If Proposition 65 warnings for lead should no longer be required, True Value shall have no further obligations pursuant to this Settlement Agreement.

3. PENALTIES PURSUANT TO HEALTH & SAFETY CODE SECTION 25249.7(b)

In settlement of all the claims referred to in this Settlement Agreement, True Value shall pay a total of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500) in civil penalties in accordance with this Section. Each penalty payment will be allocated in accordance with California Health & Safety Code section 25249.12(c)(1) & (d), with 75% of the funds remitted to the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (“OEHHA”) and the remaining 25% of the penalty remitted to Ecological.

4. REIMBURSEMENT OF FEES AND COSTS

The Parties reached an accord on the compensation due to Ecological and its counsel under the private attorney general doctrine and principles of contract law. Under these legal principles, True Value shall reimburse Ecological’s counsel for fees and costs, incurred as a result of investigating and bringing this matter to True Value’s attention. True Value shall pay Ecological’s counsel Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000) for all attorneys’ fees, expert and investigation fees, and related costs associated with this matter and the Notice.

5. PAYMENT INFORMATION

By November 10, 2016, True Value shall make a total payment of Twenty Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$20,500) for the civil penalties and attorney’s fees / costs by wire transfer to Plaintiff’s counsel Custodio & Dubey LLP:

Bank: Bank of America, N.A.

Routing No.: 026009593

Account No.: 325054144600

Beneficiary: Custodio & Dubey LLP

Other than this payment, each side is to bear its own attorneys' fees and costs.

6. RELEASE OF ALL CLAIMS

6.1 Release of True Value and Downstream Customers

In further consideration of the promises and agreements herein contained, and for the payments to be made pursuant to Sections 3 and 4 above, Ecological, 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 relating to the Products, 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, including actions of any violation(s) or claimed violation(s) of Proposition 65 or any statutory or common law claim that has been, could have been or may in the future be asserted against the Releasees regarding exposing persons to lead and the failure to warn about exposure to the lead arising in connection with the Products manufactured, shipped, and/or otherwise distributed prior to the Effective Date, even if sold by Releasees after the Effective Date (collectively "Claims"), against True Value and each of its downstream distributors, wholesalers, licensors, licensees, auctioneers, retailers, members, franchisees, dealers, customers, owners, purchasers, users, parent companies, corporate affiliates, subsidiaries, and their respective officers, directors, attorneys, representatives, shareholders, agents, and employees, and sister and parent entities (collectively

“Releasees”).

Ecological also, in its capacity, on behalf of itself, its past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, successors, and/or assignees and *not* in its representative capacity, provides a general release herein which shall be effective as a full and final accord and satisfaction, as a bar to all actions, causes of action, obligations, costs, expenses, attorneys’ fees, damages, losses, claims, liabilities and demands of any nature, character or kind, known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected, against True Value and the Releasees. Ecological acknowledges that it is familiar with California Civil Code section 1542, 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.

Ecological, in its capacity only, and on behalf of itself, 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 California Civil Code section 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.

6.2 True Value’s Release of Ecological

True Value waives any and all claims against Ecological, its attorneys and other representatives, for any and all actions taken or statements made (or those that could have been taken or made) by Ecological and its 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 the Products.

7. GOVERNING LAW

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 or is otherwise rendered inapplicable by reason of law generally, or as to the Products, then True Value shall have no further obligations pursuant to this Settlement Agreement.

8. NOTICES

Unless specified herein, all correspondence and notices required to be provided pursuant to this Settlement Agreement 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 True Value:

True Value Company
c/o Robert Bridge
8600 West Bryn Mawr Avenue
Chicago, IL 60631

For Ecological:

Vineet Dubey
Custodio & Dubey LLP
448 S. Hill St., Suite 612
Los Angeles, CA 90401

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. COUNTERPARTS; FACSIMILE SIGNATURES

This Settlement Agreement 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. **COMPLIANCE WITH HEALTH & SAFETY CODE SECTION 25249.7(f)**



Ecological agrees to comply with the reporting form requirements referenced in California Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(f).

11. **MODIFICATION**

This Settlement Agreement may be modified only by a written agreement signed by the Parties.

12. **AUTHORIZATION**

The undersigned are authorized to execute this Settlement Agreement on behalf of their respective Parties and have read, understood and agree to all of the terms and conditions of this Settlement Agreement.

AGREED TO:	AGREED TO:
Date : October <u>25</u> , 2016	Date: October <u>27</u> , 2016
By: <u></u>	By: <u></u>
On Behalf of Ecological Alliance, LLC	On Behalf of True Value Company