

# SETTLEMENT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Ecological Alliance, LLC and Cequent Performance Products, Inc.

This Settlement Agreement is entered into by and between Ecological Alliance, LLC (“Ecological”), on the one hand, and Cequent Performance Products, Inc. (“Cequent”), on the other hand, with Ecological and Cequent 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 Cequent is a company in the course of doing business for purposes of Proposition 65.

### 1.2 General Allegations

Ecological alleges that Cequent distributed and/or sold in the State of California coupler locks 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 cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm.

### 1.3 Product Description

The products that are covered by this Settlement Agreement are defined as coupler locks that Cequent has sold, offered for sale or distributed in California that contain lead. All such items shall be referred to herein as the “Products.”

### 1.4 Notice of Violation

On September 27, 2016, Ecological served Cequent, Amazon.com, Inc., 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” (“Notice”) that provided Cequent and such public enforcers with notice that alleged that Cequent 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. To the best of the Parties’ knowledge, no public enforcer has commenced or is diligently prosecuting the allegations set forth in the Notice.

**1.5     No Admission**

Cequent denies the 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 Cequent 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 Cequent of any fact, finding, conclusion, issue of law, or violation of law, such being specifically denied by Cequent. However, this section shall not diminish or otherwise affect the obligations, responsibilities, and duties of Cequent under this Settlement Agreement.

**1.6     Effective Date**

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

**2.     INJUNCTIVE RELIEF: WARNING**

**2.1     Warning**

Products shall be accompanied by a warning as described in Section 2.2 below no later than 90 days after the Effective Date. The warning requirements set forth in Section 2.2 below shall apply only to Products 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 or that Cequent places into the stream of commerce within 90 days of the Effective Date.

## **2.2 Warning Language**

Where required, Cequent shall provide Proposition 65 warnings as follows:

- (a) Cequent may use any of the following warning statements in full compliance with this Section:
  - (1) **WARNING:** This product contains a chemical known to the State of California to cause birth defects and other reproductive harm.
  - (2) **WARNING:** This product contains chemicals known to the State of California to cause cancer and birth defects, or other reproductive harm.
  - (3) **WARNING:** This product can expose you to lead, which is known to the State of California to cause cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm. For more info go to [www.P65Warnings.ca.gov](http://www.P65Warnings.ca.gov).
  - (4) **WARNING:** Cancer and Reproductive Harm – [www.P65Warnings.ca.gov](http://www.P65Warnings.ca.gov).
- (b) If Cequent elects to use the warning statements identified in either 2.2(a)(3) or (4), it may also include a symbol consisting of a black exclamation point in a yellow equilateral triangle with a bold black outline. Where the sign, label or shelf tag for the product is not printed using the color yellow, the symbol may be printed in black and white. The symbol shall be placed to the left of the text of the warning, in a size no smaller than the height of the word “WARNING”.

(c) 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.

(d) If Proposition 65 warnings for lead should no longer be required, Cequent 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, Cequent shall pay a total of \$2,000 in civil penalties in accordance with this Section. The 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. Ecological’s counsel shall be responsible for delivering OEHHA’s portion of any penalty payment made under this Settlement Agreement.

**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, Cequent shall reimburse Ecological’s counsel for fees and costs, incurred as a result of investigating and bringing this matter to Cequent’s attention. Cequent shall pay Ecological’s counsel \$21,000 for all attorneys’ fees, expert and investigation fees, and related costs associated with this matter and the Notice.

**5. PAYMENT INFORMATION**

By March 30, 2017, Cequent shall make a total payment of \$23,000 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 Cequent, Downstream Customers and Upstream Vendors**

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 (collectively "Claims"), against (a) Cequent, (b) each of Cequent's downstream distributors (including Amazon.com, Inc.), wholesalers, licensors, licensees, auctioneers, retailers, franchisees, dealers, shareholders, cooperative members, customers, owners, purchasers, users, and (c) Cequent's parent companies, corporate affiliates, subsidiaries, and their respective officers, directors, attorneys, representatives, shareholders, agents, and employees, and sister and parent entities, including but not limited to Horizon Global. (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 Cequent 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 CEQUENTERIALLY 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 Cequent's Release of Ecological**

Cequent 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 Cequent 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 Cequent:

Elizabeth V McNulty, Esq.  
Taylor Anderson LLP  
19100 Von Karman Ave., Suite 820  
Irvine, CA 92612

For Ecological:

Vineet Dubey, Esq.  
Custodio & Dubey LLP  
448 S. Hill St., Suite 612  
Los Angeles, CA 90013

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/E-SIGNATURES**

This Settlement Agreement may be executed in counterparts and by facsimile or e-signatures, 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)**

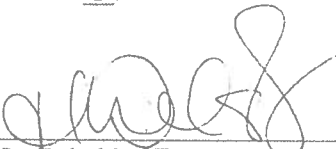
Ecological agrees to comply with the reporting form requirements referenced in California Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(f).

**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.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>AGREED TO:</b></p> <p>Date : March <u>13</u> 2017</p> <p>By: </p> <p>On Behalf of Ecological Alliance, LLC</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>AGREED TO:</b></p> <p>Date: March __, 2017</p> <p>By: _____</p> <p>On Behalf of Cequent Performance Products, Inc.</p>
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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.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>AGREED TO:</b></p> <p>Date : March __, 2017</p> <p>By: _____ On Behalf of Ecological Alliance, LLC</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>AGREED TO:</b></p> <p>Date: March <u>14</u>, 2017</p> <p>By:  _____ On Behalf of Cequent Performance Products, Inc.</p>
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