

## SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

### 1. INTRODUCTION

**1.1 The Parties.** This Settlement Agreement is entered into by and between Hector Velarde (“Velarde”) and Josie Accessories, Inc. (“Josie Accessories”). Together, Velarde and Josie Accessories are collectively referred to as the “Parties.” Velarde is an individual that resides in the State of California, and seeks to promote awareness of exposures to toxic chemicals and to improve human health by reducing or eliminating hazardous substances contained in consumer products. Velarde alleges that Josie Accessories is a person in the course of doing business for purposes of the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, Health & Safety Code § 25249.6, *et seq.* (“Proposition 65”).

**1.2 General Allegations.** Velarde alleges that Josie Accessories has imported, distributed and/or sold in the State of California vinyl placemats that contain Di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP) without first providing a requisite Proposition 65 exposure warning. On January 1, 1988, the State of California listed DEHP as a chemical known to the State to cause cancer. On October 24, 2003, the State of California listed DEHP as a chemical known to cause reproductive toxicity.

**1.3 Product Description.** The products covered by this Settlement Agreement are vinyl placemats manufactured by Josie Accessories including, but not limited to, Spider Web Placemats 400160232158 DV04 D1087 C4679 (the “Product” or “Products”) that have been imported, distributed, offered for sale and/or sold in California by Josie Accessories, that contain DEHP.

**1.4 Notice of Violation.** On April 24, 2018, Velarde served Josie Accessorie, Ross Stores, Inc. (“Ross Stores”), and various public enforcement agencies with a document entitled “Notice of Violation of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.5, *et seq.*” (the “Notice”). The Notice provided Josie Accessories and such others, including public enforcers, with notice that alleged that Josie Accessories was in violation of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.5, for failing to warn consumers and customers that the Product exposed users in California to DEHP. No public enforcer has diligently prosecuted the allegations set forth in the Notice.

**1.5 No Admission.** Josie Accessories denies the material factual and legal allegations contained in the Notice and maintains that, to the best of its knowledge, all products that are or have been sold and distributed in California, including the Products, have been and are in compliance with all laws. Nothing in this Settlement Agreement shall be construed as an admission by Josie Accessories 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 Josie Accessories of any fact, finding, conclusion, issue of law or violation of law, such being specifically denied by Josie Accessories. However, Paragraph 1.5 shall not diminish or otherwise affect the obligations, responsibilities and duties under this Settlement Agreement. Notwithstanding the allegations in the Notice, Josie Accessories maintains that it has not knowingly manufactured, or caused to be manufactured, the Products for sale in California in violation of Proposition 65.

**1.6 Effective Date.** For purposes of this Settlement Agreement, the term “Effective Date” shall be July 4, 2018.

**2. INJUNCTIVE RELIEF: WARNINGS**

**2.1 Commitment to Warn or Reformulate.** Commencing ninety (90) days after the Effective Date, and continuing thereafter, Josie Accessories shall not manufacture or order from any supplier any Products intended for retail sale in California that contains DEHP on any component to which consumers are exposed in excess of 0.1% (1,000 ppm) (hereinafter “Reformulated Products”) unless the Product is accompanied by a warning that complies with Article 6 of Title 27 of the California Code of Regulations. Products sold by Josie Accessories before the date this Settlement Agreement is signed by both Parties may sell through without a warning even if not Reformulated Products. Until August 30, 2018, the warning shall consist of either:

(a) **“WARNING: This product contains a chemical known to the State of California to cause cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm.”; or**

(b)<sup>1</sup> (1) **⚠ WARNING:** This product can expose you to chemicals, including DEHP, which is known to the State of California to cause birth defects or other reproductive harm.

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<sup>1</sup> The triangular symbol need only be in yellow where the sign, label, shelf tag or other transmission format is being printed in color for purposes of other language, symbols or designs.

For more information go to [www.P65Warnings.ca.gov](http://www.P65Warnings.ca.gov); or (2) **⚠ WARNING:** Cancer and Reproductive Harm - [www.P65Warnings.ca.gov](http://www.P65Warnings.ca.gov).<sup>2</sup>

For Products manufactured on and after August 30, 2018, the warning set forth in Paragraph 2.1(b) shall be used.

**2.2 Warning Application.** The warning provided pursuant to Paragraph 2.1 shall be affixed to or printed on the Product's packaging or labeling, or on a placard, shelf tag, sign or electronic device or automatic process, providing that the warning is displayed with such conspicuousness, as compared with other words, statements, or designs as to render it likely to be read and understood by an ordinary individual under customary conditions of purchase or use. A warning may be contained in the same section of the packaging, labeling, or instruction booklet that states other safety warnings, if any, concerning the use of the product and shall be at least the same size as those other safety warnings.

### **3. PAYMENTS**

**3.1 Payments from Defendant.** Josie Accessories shall make payments under this agreement that amount to a total of \$21,000.00.

**3.2 Penalties Pursuant To Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(b).** In settlement of all the claims referred to in this Settlement Agreement, Josie Accessories shall pay a total of \$1,500.00 as a Civil Penalty in accordance with this Section. The Civil Penalty payment shall be allocated in accordance with California Health & Safety Code § 25249.12(c)(1) and (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 Velarde. The Civil Penalty payment(s) shall be delivered to the addresses identified in Paragraph 3.2, below. Josie Accessories shall be liable for additional

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<sup>2</sup> This short-form warning at Subsection 2.1(b)(2) may be used only on a product, product label, or as part of an internet warning, and must be in a type size no smaller than the largest type size used for consumer information on the product and no case smaller than 6-point type. The short-form warning may not be used on a warning sign, e.g., point-of-sale or shelf sign.

civil penalties equal to \$100.00 per day for all amounts due and owing that are not received within the penalty payment time set forth below.

**3.2.1 Civil Penalty.** Within five (5) days of the Effective Date, Josie Accessories shall issue two separate checks for the Civil Penalty payment to (a) "OEHHA" in the amount of \$1,125.00; and (b) "Brodsky & Smith, LLC in Trust for Velarde" in the amount of \$375.00. The Civil Penalty payments shall be delivered to the addresses identified in Paragraph 3.2, below.

**3.2.2 Payment Procedures.**

**(a) Issuance of Payments.** Payments shall be delivered as follows:

(i) All payments owed to Velarde, pursuant to Paragraph 3.1 shall be delivered to the following payment address:

Evan J. Smith, Esquire  
Brodsky & Smith, LLC  
Two Bala Plaza, Suite 510  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

(ii) All payments owed to OEHHA (EIN: 68-0284486), pursuant to Paragraph 3.1 shall be delivered directly to OEHHA (Memo Line "Prop 65 Penalties") at the following addresses:

For United States Postal Service Delivery:

Mike Gyurics  
Fiscal Operations Branch Chief  
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment  
P.O. Box 4010  
Sacramento, CA 95812-4010

For Non-United States Postal Service Delivery:

Mike Gyurics  
Fiscal Operations Branch Chief  
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment  
1001 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**(b) Copy of Payments to OEHHA.** Josie Accessories agrees to provide Velarde's counsel with a copy of the checks payable to OEHHA, simultaneous with its penalty

payments to Velarde, to be delivered to the address provided in Paragraph 3.2(a)(i), as proof of payment to OEHHA.

**(c) Tax Documentation.** Josie Accessories agrees to provide a completed IRS 1099 for its payments to, and Velarde agrees to provide IRS W-9 forms for, each of the following payees under this Settlement Agreement:

(i) “Hector Velarde” whose address and tax identification number shall be provided within five (5) days after this Settlement Agreement is fully executed by the Parties;

(ii) “Brodsky & Smith, LLC” (EIN: 23-2971061) at the address provided in Paragraph 3.2(a)(i); and

(iii) “Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment” 1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814.

**3.3 Reimbursement Of Fees And Costs.** The Parties acknowledge that Velarde and his counsel offered to reach preliminary agreement on the material terms of this dispute before reaching terms on the amount of fees and costs to be reimbursed to them. The Parties thereafter reached an accord on the compensation due to Velarde and his counsel under general contract principles and the private attorney general doctrine and principles codified at California Code of Civil Procedure § 1021.5, for all work performed through the mutual execution of this agreement. Under these legal principles, Josie Accessories shall reimburse Velarde’s counsel \$19,500.00 for fees and costs incurred as a result of investigating and bringing this matter to Josie Accessories’ attention, and negotiating a settlement in the public interest. Payment pursuant to this Section shall be made as follows:

- Within five (5) days of the Effective Date, Josie Accessories shall issue a check payable to “Brodsky & Smith, LLC” in the amount of \$5,500.00 for delivery to the address identified in Paragraph 3.2(a), above;
- By or before August 4, 2018, Josie Accessories shall issue a check payable to “Brodsky & Smith, LLC” in the amount of \$7,000.00 for delivery to the address identified in Paragraph 3.2(a), above; and

- By or before September 4, 2018, Josie Accessories shall issue a check payable to "Brodsky & Smith, LLC" in the amount of \$7,000.00 for delivery to the address identified in Paragraph 3.2(a), above.

Josie Accessories shall be liable for additional attorneys' fees equal to \$100.00 per day for all amounts due and owing that are not received within the five (5) calendar days of the payment dates set forth above.

#### **4. RELEASE OF ALL CLAIMS**

**4.1 Release of Josie Accessories and Downstream Customers and Entities.** This Settlement Agreement is a full, final and binding resolution between Velarde, acting on his own behalf, and Josie Accessories, of any violation of Proposition 65 that was or could have been asserted by Velarde or on behalf of his past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, successors, and/or assigns ("Releasors") for failure to provide warnings for alleged exposures to DEHP contained in the Products, and Releasors hereby release any such claims against Josie Accessories and its parents, subsidiaries, affiliated entities, shareholders, marketplaces, directors, officers, agents, employees, attorneys, successors and assignees, and each entity to whom Josie Accessories directly or indirectly distributes or sells the Products, including but not limited to, downstream distributors, wholesalers, customers, retailers, including but not limited to Ross Stores, and its respective subsidiaries, affiliates and parents, franchisees, cooperative members and licensees, (collectively, the "Releasees"), from all claims for violations of Proposition 65 through the Effective Date based on their failure to warn about alleged exposures to the chemical DEHP that is contained in the Products, and were manufactured, distributed, sold and/or offered for sale by Josie Accessories to customers and consumers in the State of California.

In further consideration of the promises and agreements herein contained, and for the payments to be made pursuant to Sections 3 and 4 above, Velarde, on behalf of himself, his past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, successors and/or assignees, hereby covenants not to sue and waives any right to institute, participate in, directly or indirectly, any form of legal action and releases all claims that he may have, including without limitation, all actions and causes of action in law and in

equity, all obligations, expenses (including without limitation all attorneys' fees, expert fees, and investigation fees, and costs), damages, losses, liabilities and demands against any of the Releasees of any nature, character, or kind, whether known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected, limited to and arising out of the alleged or actual exposure to the chemical DEHP in the Products.

**4.2 Josie Accessories' Release of Velarde.** Josie Accessories, on behalf of itself, its past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, successors and/or assignees, hereby waives any and all claims against Velarde, his attorneys and other representatives, for any and all actions taken or statements made (or those that could have been taken or made) by Velarde and/or her attorneys and other representatives, whether in the course of investigating claims or otherwise seeking to enforce Proposition 65 against it in this matter or with respect to the Products.

**4.3 California Civil Code § 1542.** It is possible that other claims not known to the Parties arising out of the facts alleged in the Notice and relating to the Products will develop or be discovered. Velarde on behalf of himself only, on one hand, and Josie Accessories, on the other hand, acknowledge that this Agreement is expressly intended to cover and include all such claims up through the Effective Date, including all rights of action therefor. The Parties acknowledge that the claims released in Paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2, above, may include unknown claims, and nevertheless waive California Civil Code § 1542 as to any such unknown claims. California Civil Code § 1542 reads 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.

Velarde and Josie Accessories each acknowledge and understand the significance and consequences of this specific waiver of California Civil Code § 1542.

**4.4 Deemed Compliance with Proposition 65.** Compliance by Josie Accessories with this Settlement Agreement constitutes compliance with Proposition 65 with respect to exposures to DEHP in the Products.

**4.5. Public Benefit.** It is Josie Accessories' understanding that the commitments it has agreed to herein, and actions to be taken by Josie Accessories under this Settlement Agreement, would confer a significant benefit to the general public, as set forth in Code of Civil Procedure § 1021.5 and Cal. Admin. Code tit. 11, § 3201. As such, it is the intent of Josie Accessories that to the extent any other private party initiates an action alleging a violation of Proposition 65 with respect to Josie Accessories failure to provide a warning concerning exposure to DEHP with respect to the Products it has manufactured, distributed, sold, or offered for sale in California, or will manufacture, distribute, sell, or offer for sale in California, such private party action would not confer a significant benefit on the general public as to those Products addressed in this Settlement Agreement, provided that Josie Accessories is in material compliance with this Settlement Agreement.

**5. SEVERABILITY**

If, subsequent to the execution of this Settlement Agreement, any of the provisions of this Settlement Agreement are deemed by a court to be unenforceable, the validity of the enforceable provisions remaining shall not be adversely affected but only to the extent the deletion of the provision deemed unenforceable does not materially affect, or otherwise result in the effect of the Settlement Agreement being contrary to the intent of the Parties in entering into this Settlement Agreement.

**6. GOVERNING LAW**

The terms of this Settlement Agreement shall be governed by the law 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 or limited by reason of law generally, or as to the Products, Josie Accessories shall provide written notice to Velarde 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, a Product is so affected.

**7. 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 or two-day courier on any party by the other party to the following addresses:

For Josie Accessories:

Joshua Bloom  
Meyers Nave Riback Silver & Wilson, PLC  
555 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1500  
Oakland CA 94607  
Email: jbbloom@meyersnave.com

For Velarde:

Evan J. Smith  
Brodsky & Smith, LLC  
Two Bala Plaza, Suite 510  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004  
Email: esmith@brodskysmith.com

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.

8. **COUNTERPARTS: SIGNATURES**

This Settlement Agreement may be executed in counterparts and by facsimile or .pdf signature, each of which shall be deemed an original, and all of which, when taken together, shall constitute one and the same document.

9. **COMPLIANCE WITH HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 25249.7(f)**

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

10. **MODIFICATION**

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

11. **ENTIRE AGREEMENT**

This Settlement Agreement contains the sole and entire agreement of the Parties and any and all prior negotiations and understandings related hereto shall be deemed to have been merged within it. No representations or terms of agreement other than those contained herein exist or have been made by any Party with respect to the other Party or the subject matter hereof.

**12. AUTHORIZATION**

The undersigned are authorized to execute this Settlement Agreement and have read, understood and agree to all of the terms and conditions contained of this Settlement Agreement.

**AGREED TO:**

**AGREED TO:**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 06-05-2018

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hector Velarde

By:  \_\_\_\_\_  
Josie Accessories, Inc.

**12. AUTHORIZATION**

The undersigned are authorized to execute this Settlement Agreement and have read, understood and agree to all of the terms and conditions contained of this Settlement Agreement.

**AGREED TO:**

**AGREED TO:**

Date:

5/29/18

Date:

By:



Hector Velarde

By:

Josie Accessories, Inc.