

SETTLEMENT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1. **Ecological Alliance, LLC and DSD Merchandisers, Inc.**

This Settlement and Release Agreement ("Settlement Agreement") is entered into by and between Ecological Alliance, LLC ("Ecological"), on the one hand, and DSD Merchandisers, Inc. ("DSD"), on the other hand, with Ecological and DSD collectively referred to as the "Parties."

1.2. **General Allegations**

Ecological alleges that DSD manufactured and distributed and offered for sale in the State of California Turkish apricots 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"). California has identified and listed lead 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 Turkish apricots that DSD has sold, offered for sale or distributed in California. All such items shall be referred to herein as the "Products."

1.4. **Notice of Violation**

On March 25, 2021, Ecological served DSD, Winco Foods, LLC, and the requisite 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 DSD and such public enforcers with notice that DSD was allegedly 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

The Parties enter into this Settlement Agreement to settle disputed claims between them as set forth herein and in the Notice concerning DSD's compliance with Proposition 65. DSD denies the material factual and legal allegations contained in Ecological's Notice and maintains that all products that it has manufactured for sale and distribution in California, including the Products, have been and are in compliance with Proposition 65 or any other statutory, regulatory, common law or equitable doctrine. Nothing in this Settlement Agreement shall be construed as an admission by DSD 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 DSD of any fact, finding, conclusion, issue of law, or violation of law, such being specifically denied by DSD on its behalf. However, nothing in this section shall diminish or otherwise affect the obligations, responsibilities, and duties of DSD 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: WARNINGS

No later than six (6) months after the Effective Date, DSD may, in its sole discretion, either cease selling, offering for sale or distributing the Products in California, or may manufacture, import, or otherwise source for authorized sale in California only Products labeled

with a clear and reasonable Proposition 65 warning pursuant to Section 2.1 below. Products that were manufactured, supplied or contracted to be supplied to third parties by DSD prior to 6 months after the Effective Date shall be deemed exempted from the requirements of this Section 2 and shall be permitted to be sold through as previously manufactured, packaged and labeled.

2.1. Warning Language

If DSD shall continue to authorize for sale the Products in California, it will provide Proposition 65 warnings on the Product's label as follows:

- (a) DSD may use either of the following warning statements in full compliance with this Section:
 - (1) **WARNING:** Consuming this product can expose you to chemicals including lead, which is known to the State of California to cause cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm. For more information go to www.P65Warnings.ca.gov/food
 - (2) **WARNING:** Cancer and Reproductive Harm – www.P65Warnings.ca.gov/food
- (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, DSD 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, DSD shall pay a total of \$500 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, DSD shall reimburse Ecological's counsel for fees and costs, incurred as a result of investigating and bringing this matter to DSD's attention. DSD shall pay Ecological's counsel \$13,000 for all attorneys' fees, expert and investigation fees, and related costs associated with this matter and the Notice.

5. PAYMENT INFORMATION

By June 11 2021, DSD shall make a total payment of Thirteen Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$13,500) 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.: 325104702031

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 DSD, 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 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) DSD, (b) DSD's manufacturers, (c) each of DSD's downstream distributors (including but not limited to Winco Foods, LLC), wholesalers, vendors, licensors, licensees, auctioneers, retailers, franchisees, dealers, shareholders, cooperative members, customers, owners, purchasers, users, (d) DSD's parent companies, corporate affiliates, subsidiaries, doing business as entities ("DBAs"), successor companies, and their respective officers, directors, attorneys, representatives, shareholders, agents, and employees, and sister and parent entities, and (e) any third-party re-seller(s) who sold, offered for sale or distributed the Products in California, whether such actions were authorized by DSD or unauthorized (collectively "Releasees").

Ecological also, 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 DSD 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 that the creditor or releasing party does not know or suspect to exist in his or her favor at the time of executing the release and that, if known by him or her, would have materially affected his or her settlement with the debtor or released party.

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. DSD's Release of Ecological

DSD 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 DSD 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) electronic mail; or (ii) overnight courier on any party by the other party at the following addresses:

For DSD:	Robert S. Niemann, Esq. Keller & Heckman Three Embarcadero Center, Suite 1420 San Francisco, CA 94111
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For Ecological:	Vineet Dubey, Esq. Custodio & Dubey LLP 448 S. Hill St., Suite 615 Los Angeles, CA 90013
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Any party, from time to time, may specify in writing to the other party a change of address or electronic mail 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. ENTIRE AGREEMENT

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,

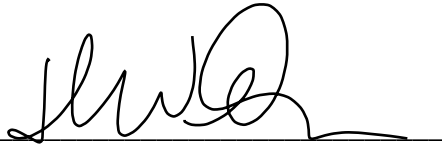
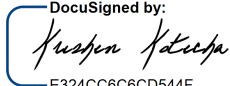
negotiations, commitments and understandings. No other agreements, oral or otherwise, exist to bind either of the Parties.

12. MODIFICATION

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

13. 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;">AGREED TO:</p> <p>Date: May ^{June} <u>2</u>, 2021</p> <p>By: </p> <p>On Behalf of Ecological Alliance, LLC</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">AGREED TO:</p> <p>Date: May __, 2021 June 2, 2021</p> <p>By:  E324CC6C6CD544F...</p> <p>On Behalf of DSD Merchandisers, Inc.</p>
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