

# SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Parties

This Settlement Agreement is entered into by and between Audrey Donaldson (“Donaldson”) and Gibson Overseas, Inc. (“Gibson”), with Donaldson and Gibson each individually referred to as a “Party” and collectively as the “Parties.” Donaldson is an individual residing in the State of California who seeks to promote awareness of exposures to toxic chemicals and to improve human health by reducing or eliminating hazardous substances used in consumer products. Donaldson alleges that Gibson is a person in the course of doing business for purposes of the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, California Health and Safety Code section 25249.6 *et seq.* (“Proposition 65”).

### 1.2 General Allegations

Donaldson alleges that Gibson manufactures, sells, and distributes for sale in California, ceramic pet bowls with exterior decorations containing lead. Lead is listed pursuant to Proposition 65 as a chemical known to cause birth defects and other reproductive harm. Donaldson alleges that Gibson failed to provide the health hazard warning required by Proposition 65 for exposures to lead.

### 1.3 Product Description

The products covered by this Settlement Agreement are ceramic pet bowls with exterior decorations containing lead that are manufactured, distributed and/or sold by Gibson, including the “*Gibson Overseas ‘Snoopy’ Ceramic Pet Bowl*” UPC: 0 85081 39867 3 (hereinafter referred to as “Products”).

### 1.4 Notice of Violation

On June 17, 2021, Donaldson served Gibson, The TJX Companies, Inc., and the requisite public enforcement agencies with a 60-Day Notice of Violation, alleging that Gibson violated Proposition 65 when it failed to warn its customers and consumers in

California of the health hazards associated with exposures to lead from the Products. No public enforcer has commenced and is diligently prosecuting the allegations set forth in the Notices.

### **1.5 No Admission**

Gibson denies the material, factual, and legal allegations contained in the Notice and maintains that all of the products that it has 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 Gibson of any fact, finding, conclusion, issue of law, or violation of law, nor shall compliance with this Settlement Agreement constitute or be construed as an admission by Gibson of any fact, finding, conclusion, issue of law, or violation of law, such being specifically denied by Gibson. This Section shall not, however, diminish or otherwise affect Gibson's obligations, responsibilities, and duties under this Settlement Agreement.

### **1.6 Effective Date**

For purposes of this Settlement Agreement, the term "Effective Date" shall mean April 15, 2022.

## **2. INJUNCTIVE RELIEF: REFORMULATION OR WARNINGS**

### **2.1 Reformulation Standards**

"Reformulated Products" are defined as those Products that: (a) contain no more than 90 parts per million ("ppm") lead in any decoration, colored artwork, designs and/or marking on the surface of the Products when analyzed pursuant to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency testing methodologies 3050B or equivalent methodologies utilized by federal or state agencies for the purpose of determining lead content in a solid substance; and (b) yield no more than 1.0 microgram of lead on any surface sampled and analyzed pursuant to the NIOSH 9100 testing protocol.


If the decoration is tested after it is affixed to the Product, the percentage of the lead by weight must related only to the decorating materials and must not include any quantity attributable to non-decorating material (e.g., ceramic substrate).

## **2.2 Reformulation/Warning Commitment**


As of the Effective Date, Gibson shall not manufacture, import, distribute, sell or offer the Products for sale in the State of California unless they are Reformulated Products pursuant to Section 2.1 or bear a warning pursuant to Section 2.3.

## **2.3 Warnings**

As of the Effective Date, all Products Gibson sells and/or distributes for sale in California that do not qualify as Reformulated Products, shall bear a clear and reasonable warning pursuant to this Section. Gibson further agrees that the warning will be prominently placed with such conspicuousness when compared with other words, statements, designs or devices as to render it likely to be read and understood by an ordinary individual under customary conditions of purchase or use. For purposes of this Consent Judgment, a clear and reasonable warning for the Products shall contain one of the following statements:

 **WARNING:** Cancer and Reproductive Harm- [www.P65Warnings.ca.gov](http://www.P65Warnings.ca.gov)

OR

 **WARNING:** 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](http://www.P65Warnings.ca.gov)

The word “**WARNING:**” shall appear in all capital letters and in bold font, followed by a colon. The warning symbol to the left of the word “**WARNING:**” must be a black exclamation point in a yellow equilateral triangle with a black outline, except that if the sign or label for the Products does not use the color yellow, the symbol may be in black and white. The symbol must be in a size no smaller than the height of the word “**WARNING:**”. The warning shall be affixed to or printed on the Products’ packaging or

labeling and 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.

### **3. MONETARY SETTLEMENT TERMS**

#### **3.1 Civil Penalty Payment**

Pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(b)(2), and in settlement of all claims alleged in the Notice or referred to in this Settlement Agreement, Gibson agrees to pay \$3,000 in civil penalties no later than the Effective Date. The penalty payment will be allocated in accordance with California Health and Safety Code section 25249.12(c)(1) & (d), with 75% of the penalty amount remitted to the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (“OEHHA”) and the remaining 25% of the penalty amount paid to Donaldson and delivered to the address in Section 3.3 herein. Gibson will provide its payment in two checks as follows: (1) “OEHHA” in the amount of \$2,250; and (2) “Audrey Donaldson” in the amount of \$750.

#### **3.2 Attorneys’ Fees and Costs**

The Parties acknowledge that Donaldson and her counsel offered to resolve this dispute without reaching terms on the amount of fees and costs to be reimbursed to them, thereby leaving the issue to be resolved after the material terms of the agreement had been settled. Shortly after the other settlement terms had been reached, Gibson expressed a desire to resolve Donaldson’s fees and costs. The Parties reached an accord on the compensation due to Donaldson’s counsel under general contract principles and the private attorney general doctrine codified at Code of Civil Procedure section 1021.5 for all work performed in this matter. Under these legal principles, on or before the Effective Date, Gibson agrees to pay \$18,500, in the form of a check made payable to “Voorhees & Bailey, LLP,” for all fees and costs incurred investigating, bringing this matter to the attention of Gibson’s management, and negotiating a settlement.

### **3.3 Payment Address**

All payments under this Settlement Agreement shall be delivered to the following address:

Voorhees & Bailey, LLP  
990 Amarillo Avenue  
Palo Alto, CA 94303

## **4. CLAIMS COVERED AND RELEASED**

### **4.1 Donaldson's Release of Proposition 65 Claims**

Donaldson acting on her own behalf, and not on behalf of the public, releases Gibson, their parents, subsidiaries, affiliated entities under common ownership, directors, officers, agents employees, attorneys, and each entity to whom Gibson directly or indirectly distributes or sell Products, including, but not limited to, downstream distributors, wholesalers, customers, retailers, franchisees, cooperative members, and licensees (collectively, "Releasees"), from all claims for violations of Proposition 65 through the Effective Date based on unwarned exposures to lead in the Products. The Parties further understand and agree that this Section 4.1 release shall not extend upstream to any entities that manufactured the Products or any component parts thereof, or any distributors or suppliers who sold the Products or any component parts thereof to Gibson.

### **4.2 Donaldson's Individual Release of Claims**

Donaldson, in her individual capacity only and not in her representative capacity, provides a 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 Donaldson of any nature, character, or kind, whether known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected, limited to and arising out of alleged or actual exposures to lead in the Products manufactured, imported, distributed, or sold by Gibson prior to the Effective Date. The Parties further understand and agree that this Section 4.2 release shall not extend upstream to any

entities that manufactured the Products, or any component parts thereof, or any distributors or suppliers who sold the Products, or any component parts thereof to Gibson. Nothing in this Section affects Donaldson's right to commence or prosecute an action under Proposition 65 against a Releasee that does not involve Gibson's Products.

#### **4.3 Gibson's Release of Donaldson**

Gibson, on its own behalf, and on behalf of its past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, successors, and/or assignees, hereby waives any and all claims against Donaldson and her attorneys and other representatives, for any and all actions taken or statements made by Donaldson and her attorneys and other representatives, whether in the course of investigating claims, seeking to enforce Proposition 65 against it in this matter, or with respect to the Products.

#### **5. SEVERABILITY**

If, subsequent to the execution of this Settlement Agreement, any provision of this Settlement Agreement is deemed by a court to be unenforceable, the validity of the remaining provisions shall not be adversely affected.

#### **6. 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 Gibson may provide written notice to Donaldson of any asserted change in the law and shall have no further injunctive obligations pursuant to this Settlement Agreement with respect to, and to the extent that, the Products are so affected.

#### **7. NOTICE**

Unless specified herein, all correspondence and notice required to be provided pursuant to this Settlement Agreement shall be in writing and sent by: (a) personal delivery; (b) first-class, registered or certified mail, return receipt requested; or (c) a recognized overnight courier on any Party by the other at the following addresses:

**For Gibson Overseas, Inc.:**

Deepi Miller, Esq.  
Greenberg Traurig, LLP  
1201 K Street, Suite 1100  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**For Donaldson:**

Audrey Donaldson  
c/o Voorhees & Bailey, LLP  
990 Amarillo Avenue  
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Any Party may, from time to time, specify in writing to the other a change of address to which all notices and other communications shall be sent.

**8. COUNTERPARTS; FACSIMILE SIGNATURES**

This Settlement Agreement may be executed in counterparts and by facsimile or portable document format (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)**

Donaldson and her attorneys agree to comply with the reporting form requirements referenced in California Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(f).

**10. MODIFICATION**

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

**11. AUTHORIZATION**

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

**AGREED TO:**

Date: April 11, 2022

**AGREED TO:**

Date:

By: 

AUDREY DONALDSON

By: 

GIBSON OVERSEAS, INC.