

SETTLEMENT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1. **Ecological Alliance, LLC and The Hillman Group, Inc.**

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

1.2. **General Allegations**

Alliance alleges that Hillman manufactured and/or distributed and/or offered for sale in the State of California ID badge sleeves containing Di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate [DEHP] 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 DEHP 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 ID badge sleeves that contain DEHP that Hillman 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 July 25, 2022, Alliance served Hillman, McFadden-Dale Industrial Hardware LLC, and the requisite public enforcement agencies eligible to initiate Proposition 65 actions on behalf of the People of the State of California with documents entitled "60-Day Notice of Violation" ("Notice") that provided Hillman and such public enforcers with notice that Hillman 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 DEHP. 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 Hillman's compliance with Proposition 65. Specifically, Hillman denies the material factual and legal allegations contained in Alliance'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 Hillman 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 Hillman of any fact, finding, conclusion, issue of law, or violation of law, such being specifically denied by Hillman. However, nothing in this section shall diminish or otherwise affect the obligations, responsibilities, and duties of Hillman 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 AND REFORMULATION**

2.1. **Reformulation Option**

Products manufactured after the Effective Date shall be deemed to comply with Proposition 65 with regard to DEHP and be exempt from any Proposition 65 warning requirements for DEHP if the Products do not contain more than 1,000 ppm of DEHP.

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, no later than 120 days after the Effective Date. These warning requirements shall apply only to Products that are distributed, marketed, sold or shipped for sale in the State of California. These warning requirements shall not apply to Products that are already in the stream of commerce as of the Effective Date or that Hillman places into the stream of commerce within 120 days of the Effective Date.

2.3. **Warning Language**

(a) Where required, Hillman shall provide Proposition 65 warnings by affixing to the Products, labeling or packaging warnings that state:

- (1) **WARNING:** This product can expose you to DEHP, 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.

or

(2) **WARNING:** Cancer and Reproductive Harm –
www.P65Warnings.ca.gov.

(b) If Hillman uses the warning statements identified in 2.3(a)(1) or (2), it shall include a symbol consisting of a black exclamation point in a yellow equilateral triangle with a bold black outline. Where the label 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 DEHP should no longer be required, Hillman shall have no further obligations pursuant to this Settlement Agreement.

(e) In the event that the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment promulgates one or more regulations requiring or permitting warning text and/or methods of transmission different than those set forth above, Hillman shall be entitled to use, at their discretion, such other warning text and/or method of transmission without being deemed in breach of 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, Hillman 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 Alliance. Alliance'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 Alliance and its counsel under the private attorney general doctrine and principles of contract law. Under these legal principles, Hillman shall reimburse Alliance's counsel for fees and costs, incurred as a result of investigating and bringing this matter to Hillman's attention. Hillman shall pay Alliance's counsel \$12,000 for all attorneys' fees, expert and investigation fees, and related costs associated with this matter and the Notice.

5. PAYMENT INFORMATION

By October 24, 2022, Hillman shall make a total payment of Twelve Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$12,500) for the civil penalties and attorney's fees / costs by check or wire transfer to Plaintiff's counsel Custodio & Dubey LLP. If payment is made by check, said check shall be made payable to Custodio & Dubey LLP and mailed to Custodio & Dubey LLP, 445 S. Figueroa Street, Suite 2520, Los Angeles, CA 90071. If payment is made by wire transfer, the instructions for such are as follows:

Bank: Bank of America, N.A.

Routing No.: 026009593

Account No.: 325149324377

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 Hillman, 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, Alliance, 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) Hillman, (b) each of Hillman's downstream distributors, wholesalers, vendors, licensors, licensees, auctioneers, retailers (including, but not limited to, McFadden-Dale Industrial Hardware LLC), franchisees, dealers, shareholders, cooperative members, customers, owners, purchasers, users, and (c) Hillman's parent companies, corporate affiliates, subsidiaries, and their respective officers, directors, attorneys, representatives, shareholders, agents, and employees, and sister and parent entities. (collectively "Releasees").

Alliance 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 Hillman and the Releasees. Alliance 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.

Alliance, 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. Hillman's Release of Alliance

Hillman waives any and all claims against Alliance, its attorneys and other representatives, for any and all actions taken or statements made (or those that could have been taken or made) by Alliance 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 Hillman 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 Hillman: Douglas Roberts
 General Counsel
 The Hillman Group, Inc.
 10590 Hamilton Ave
 Cincinnati, Ohio 45231

With a copy to Hillman's counsel:
 John E. Dittoe
 Law Office of John E. Dittoe
 70 Hazel Lane
 Piedmont, CA 94611

For Alliance: Vineet Dubey, Esq.
 Custodio & Dubey LLP
 445 S. Figueroa St., Suite 2520
 Los Angeles, CA 90071

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)

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

11. ENTIRE AGREEMENT

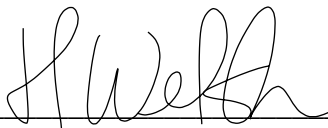

This Settlement Agreement contains the sole and entire agreement and understanding of the Parties with respect to the entire subject matter hereof, and all related prior discussions, negotiations, commitments and understandings. No other agreements, oral or otherwise, exist to bind either of the Parties.

12. MODIFICATION

This Settlement Agreement may be modified only by: (a) a written agreement signed by the Parties or (b) Court order.

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.

AGREED TO: Date: October <u>14</u> , 2022 By: <u></u> On Behalf of Ecological Alliance, LLC	AGREED TO: Date: October <u>14</u> , 2022 Daniel M. Bauer, Asst. General Counsel By: <u></u> On Behalf of The Hillman Group, Inc.
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