

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND RELEASE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Parties

This settlement agreement (“Settlement Agreement”) is entered into by and between CalSafe Research Center, Inc., (“CRC”), on the one hand, and Mekhala Pte Ltd., (“Mekhala” or “Defendant”) on the other hand, with CRC and Mekhala each individually referred to as a "Party" and collectively as the "Parties.”

1.2 General Allegations

CRC alleges in a 60-Day Notice of Violation dated September 23, 2022, and amended on March 15, 2023, that Mekhala sells and/or distributes lemongrass turmeric paste in California that contains lead without a warning required by Health and Safety Code §§ 25249.5 *et seq.* (“Proposition 65”) (collectively the “Notice”). Lead is listed pursuant to Proposition 65 as a chemical known to cause cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm.

1.3 Product Description

The product covered by this Settlement Agreement is defined as, and expressly limited to “Mekhala, Lemongrass Turmeric Paste”, (hereinafter the "Product") that contains lead and that is manufactured, sold or distributed for sale in California by Mekhala.

1.4 Notice of Violation

On September 23, 2022, CRC served the Notice and on March 15, 2023 CRC served the amended Notice on Mekhala Living Inc., the California Attorney General and the other requisite public enforcers, alleging that Mekhala and others violated Proposition 65 when they failed to consumers in California of the alleged exposures to lead from the Product.

To the best of the Parties' knowledge, no public enforcer has commenced and is diligently prosecuting an action to enforce the violations alleged in the Notice.

1.5 No Admission

Mekhala denies the material, factual and legal allegations in the Notice and maintains that all of the products it sold and/or distributed for sale in California, including the Product, have been, and are, in compliance with all laws. Nothing in this Settlement Agreement shall be construed as an admission by Mekhala or any of its officers, directors, shareholders, employees, agents, parent companies, subsidiaries, divisions, affiliates, franchisees, licensees, customers, suppliers, distributors, wholesalers, indemnitees, or retailers 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 Mekhala or any of its officers, directors, shareholders, employees, agents, parent companies, subsidiaries, divisions, affiliates, franchisees, licensees, customers, suppliers, distributors, wholesalers, indemnitees, or retailers of any fact, finding, conclusion, issue of law or violation of law, such being specifically denied by Mekhala. This Section shall not, however, diminish or otherwise affect Mekhala’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 the date on which a complete and fully executed copy of this Settlement Agreement is exchanged by the Parties' counsel.

2. INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

2.1 Clear and Reasonable Warnings

Mekhala agrees to only manufacture for sale, purchase for sale, import for sale, or distribute for sale in or into California (in person or online) the Product that contains a warning as provided for in paragraph 2.2.

2.2 General Warning Requirements

Mekhala agrees that each warning shall be prominently placed with such conspicuousness, as 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 before purchase or use. Each warning shall be provided in a manner such that the consumer or user understands to which *specific* Product the warning applies, so as to minimize the risk of consumer confusion.

For purposes of this Settlement Agreement, a clear and reasonable warning for the Product shall consist of a warning affixed to the packaging, label, tag, or directly to each of the Product sold or distributed in California by Mekhala that contains one of the following statements:

- 1) **WARNING:** Consuming this product can expose you to 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:** 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
- 3) **WARNING:** [Cancer and] Reproductive Harm-www.P65Warnings.ca.gov/food.

Mekhala shall use the phrase "cancer and" in the warning if Mekhala has reason to believe that the "Daily Lead Exposure Level" is greater than 15 micrograms of lead. However, use of the phrase "cancer and" shall not constitute an admission that the Daily Lead Exposure Level" is indeed greater than 15 micrograms of lead.

The warning shall be offset in a box with black outline. Within 30 days of the Effective Date, one of the foregoing warnings shall be posted on any website where the Product is sold in California. Where a consumer product sign, label or shelf tag used to provide a warning includes consumer information in language(s) other than English, the warning must also be provided in the other language(s) in addition to English.

(i) Changes in Warning Regulations or Statutes

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, Mekhala shall be entitled to use, at its discretion, such other warning text and/or method of transmission without being deemed in breach of this Agreement. If regulations, legislation or judicial rulings are enacted or issued providing that a Proposition 65 warning for the product is no longer required, a lack of warning will not thereafter be a breach of this Agreement.

2.3 Grace Period for Existing Inventory of Products

The injunctive requirements of Section 2 shall not apply to Product that is already in the stream of commerce as of the Effective Date, which Product is expressly subject to the releases provided in Section 4.1.

3. MONETARY SETTLEMENT TERMS

3.1 Total Settlement Payment

In full satisfaction of all potential civil penalties, attorneys' fees, and costs, Mekhala shall make a total settlement payment of Twenty Thousand Dollars **(\$20,000.00)** ("Total Settlement Amount"). The Total Settlement Amount shall be apportioned into a Civil Penalty and Attorney's Fees and Costs, an Additional Settlement Payment and a Cost Reimbursement as set forth in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 below.

3.2 Civil Penalty Payment

Pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(b)(2), and in settlement of all claims alleged in the Notice or referred to in this Settlement Agreement, Mekhala agrees to pay Two Thousand Dollars **(\$2,000.00)** in civil penalties. The penalty payment will be allocated in accordance with California Health and Safety Code §§ 25249.12(c)(1) & (d), with 75% of the penalty amount paid to the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment ("OEHHA") and the remaining 25% of the penalty amount retained by CRC. Within fifteen (15) days of the Effective Date, Mekhala shall, pursuant to the instructions below, wire to OEHHA the amount of One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars **(\$1,500.00)**, and shall, pursuant to the instructions below, wire to CRC the amount of Five Hundred Dollars **(\$500.00)**.

All payments owed to OEHHA (EIN: 68-0284486) shall be sent via wire to:

Account Name: OEHHA
Bank Name: Bank of America
Bank Address: 2000 Clayton Road, Bldg. D, 5th Fl., Concord, CA 94520
Account No.: 01482-80005
ABA No.: 026009593

Memo: "OEHHA beneficiary for purpose of Prop. 65"

All penalty payments owed to CRC shall be sent via wire to:

Wire & ACH Instructions:

Account Name: The Law Offices of Joseph R. Manning
Bank Name: J.P. Morgan Chase Bank, N.A.
Bank Address: 270 Park Ave. New York, NY. 10017
ACH Routing / ABA Number: 322271627
Wire Routing / ABA Number: 021000021
Account Number: 802922919

For further benefit of: Civil Penalty Payment File No. P65-0327

3.3 Attorney Fees and Costs

The Parties reached an accord on the compensation due to CRC and its counsel under the private attorney general doctrine and principles of contract law. Under these legal principles, within fifteen (15) days of the date this Settlement Agreement is executed by the Parties, Mekhala agrees to pay Eighteen Thousand Dollars (**\$18,000.00**) to CRC and its counsel for all fees and costs incurred in investigating, bringing this matter to the attention of Mekhala, and negotiating a settlement.

The payment shall be sent via wire to:

Wire & ACH Instructions:

Account Name: The Law Offices of Joseph R. Manning
Bank Name: J.P. Morgan Chase Bank, N.A.
Bank Address: 270 Park Ave. New York, NY. 10017
ACH Routing / ABA Number: 322271627
Wire Routing / ABA Number: 021000021
Account Number: 802922919

For further benefit of: Civil Penalty Payment File No. P65-0327

3.4 Tax Documentation

Mekhala agrees to provide a completed IRS 1099 form for its payments to, and CRC and Manning Law agree to provide IRS W-9 forms for, each of the payees under this Settlement Agreement. The Parties acknowledge that Mekhala cannot issue any settlement payments pursuant to Section 3 above until after Mekhala receives the requisite W-9 forms from CRC's counsel.

4. CLAIMS COVERED AND RELEASED; REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 CRC's Release of Mekhala

CRC, acting on its own behalf and not on behalf of the public, fully releases and discharges Mekhala and its respective officers, directors, shareholders, employees, agents, parent companies, subsidiaries, divisions, affiliates, franchisees, licensees, customers, suppliers, distributors (the "Defendant Releasees") and all entities to which Defendant Releasees directly or indirectly distribute or sell the Product, and any other distributors, wholesalers, customers, retailers (including, but not limited to, Albertsons Companies, Inc.), franchisees, licensors, and licensees, (collectively, the "Released Parties" and individually, a "Released Party"). CRC, on behalf of itself and its officers, directors, shareholders, employees, agents, parent companies, subsidiaries and divisions hereby fully releases and discharges the Released Parties from any and all claims, actions, causes of action, suits, demands, liabilities, damages, penalties, fees, costs, and expenses asserted, or that could have been asserted based on or related to the handling, use, sale, distribution or consumption of the Products in California, as to any alleged violation of Proposition 65 or its implementing regulations, including without limitation any failure to provide Proposition 65 warnings on the Products with respect to exposures to lead.

4.2 Mekhala's Release of CRC

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

4.3 California Civil Code Section 1542

It is possible that other claims not known to the Parties, arising out of the Notice or relating to the Products, will develop or be discovered. CRC on behalf of itself only, and Mekhala on behalf of itself only, acknowledge that this Settlement Agreement is expressly intended to cover and include all such claims up through and including the Effective Date, including all rights of action therefore. CRC and Mekhala acknowledge that the claims released in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 above may include unknown claims, and nevertheless waive California Civil Code section 1542 as to any such unknown claims. California Civil Code section 1542 reads 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.

4.4 Non-Assignment; No Consents Necessary

CRC represents and warrants that it has not heretofore assigned or otherwise transferred, or attempted to assign, or transfer, any claim against the Released Parties and that there is no other person or legal entity that has not executed this Agreement as a releasing party that has any interest in any such claim against the Released Parties. CRC further represents that execution of this Settlement Agreement does not require the consent of any third party not previously obtained or given.

5. SEVERABILITY

In the event that any of the provisions of this Settlement Agreement are held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be unenforceable, the validity of the remaining enforceable provisions shall not be adversely affected. However, if any court determines that the provision(s) found to be invalid, void, or unenforceable are material, causing this entire Settlement Agreement to be invalid, void, or unenforceable, or if a court invalidates the releases or exchange of money set forth herein, the Parties shall attempt in good faith to renegotiate a settlement or, if that proves unavailing, any Party can terminate the settlement. In the event this Settlement Agreement is terminated in accordance with the preceding sentence, CRC and its counsel shall return any payment made under this Settlement Agreement.

6. GOVERNING LAW

The terms of this Settlement Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of California, without regard to its conflicts of law principals.

7. NOTICE

When any Party is entitled to receive any notice under this Settlement Agreement, the notice shall be sent by first class mail or electronic mail to the address set forth in this Paragraph. Any Party may modify

the person and address to whom the notice is to be sent by sending the other Party notice by certified mail, return receipt requested. Said change shall take effect on the date the return receipt is signed by the Party receiving the change.

Notices shall be sent to:

For CRC

Joseph R. Manning, Jr.
26100 Towne Center Drive
Foothill Ranch, CA 92610
Tel: Office (949) 200-8757 Fax: (866) 843-8309
p65@manninglawoffice.com

For Mekhala

Megan O'Neill
2400 Broadway, Suite 200
Redwood City, CA 94063
415-630-4100
moneill@dtolaw.com

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. Signatures by scanned and emailed image or facsimile transmission shall have the same force and effect as original signature and as an electronic record adopted and executed by a Party with the intent to sign the electronic record pursuant to Civil Code §§ 1633.1 *et seq.*

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

CRC and its attorneys agree to comply with the reporting form requirements referenced in California Health and Safety Code §25249.7(f).

10. MODIFICATION

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

11. ENTIRE AGREEMENT

This Settlement Agreement contains the sole and entire agreement and understanding 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. No representations, oral or otherwise, express or implied, other than those specifically referred to in this Agreement have been made by, or relied on, any Party.

12. INTERPRETATION

No inference, assumption or presumption shall be drawn, and no provision of this Agreement shall be construed against any Party, based upon the fact that one of the Parties and/or their counsel prepared or drafted any portion of this Agreement. The Parties waive the provisions of Civil Code § 1654. It is

conclusively presumed that the Parties participated equally in the drafting of this Agreement.

13. ADVICE OF COUNSEL

The Parties have had the opportunity to consult with independent legal counsel with respect to the advisability of making the settlement provided for herein and for the execution of this Agreement and all other matters contained herein. The Parties acknowledge that they have been represented in the negotiations for, and in preparation of, this Agreement, by counsel of their choice, that they have read this Agreement and have had it fully explained by such counsel, and that they are fully aware of the contents of this Agreement and of the legal effect of each and every provision thereof. The Parties have made such investigation of the facts pertaining to this Agreement and of all of the matters pertaining thereto as they deem necessary.

14. 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: 12/26/2023

By: 

CalSafe Research Center, Inc.

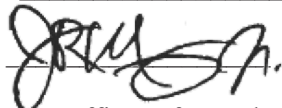
AGREED TO:

Date: _____

By: _____

CEO, Mekhala Pte Ltd.

Date: 1/29/2024

By: 

The Law Offices of Joseph R. Manning

AS TO FORM:

Date: _____

By: _____

DTO Law

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14. 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: _____

By: _____

CalSafe Research Center, Inc.

AGREED TO:

Date: Jan 21, 2024

By: *daphne hedley*
daphne.hedley (Jan 21, 2024 11:23 GMT+11)

CEO, Mekhala Pte Ltd.

Date: _____

By: _____

The Law Offices of Joseph R. Manning

AS TO FORM:

Date: 1/26/24

By: *[Signature]*

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