

## SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

### 1. INTRODUCTION

**1.1 The Parties.** This Settlement Agreement is entered into by and between Ema Bell (“Bell”) and Gourmet International, Ltd. (“Gourmet International”). Together, Bell and Gourmet International are collectively referred to as the “Parties.” Bell is an individual who 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. Bell alleges that Gourmet International 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.** Bell alleges that Gourmet International has exposed individuals to lead from its sales of RugenFisch fried herring in spicy marinade, UPC # 639138877088 without first providing users and consumers of the product with a clear and reasonable health hazard exposure warning as required pursuant to Proposition 65. Lead is listed pursuant to Proposition 65 as a chemical known to the State of California to cause cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm.

**1.3 Product Description.** The products covered by this Settlement Agreement are RugenFisch fried herring in spicy marinade, UPC # 639138877088 (the “Products”) that have been imported, distributed, offered for sale and/or sold in California by Gourmet International.

**1.4 Notice of Violation.** On August 4, 2023, Bell served World Market Management Services, LLC, Cost Plus World Market, LLC, World Market, LLC, Kingswood Capital Management, L.P., Kingswood Capital Management, LLC (collectively, “World Market”), Gourmet International, and various public enforcement agencies with a document entitled “Notice of Violation of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.6, et seq.” (the “Notice”). The Notice provided Gourmet International and such others, including public enforcers, with notice that alleged that Gourmet International was in violation of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.6, for failing to warn California consumers and customers that use of the Products will expose them to lead. No public enforcer has diligently prosecuted the allegations set forth in the Notice.

**1.5 No Admission.** Gourmet International 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 Gourmet International 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 Gourmet International of any fact, finding, conclusion, issue of law or violation of law, such being specifically denied by Gourmet International. However, this § 1.5 shall not diminish or otherwise affect the obligations, responsibilities and duties under this Settlement Agreement. Notwithstanding the allegations in the Notice, Gourmet International 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 mean the date this Agreement is last executed by the Parties.

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

**2.1 Reformulation of Products.** Commencing within sixty (60) days after the Effective Date, and continuing thereafter, Products that Gourmet International manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, or offers for sale in California, either directly or to a distributor Gourmet International knows will sell the Product to California, shall either be: (a) reformulated Products pursuant to § 2.2, below; or (b) labeled with a clear and reasonable exposure warning pursuant to §§ 2.3 - 2.4, below. For purposes of this Settlement Agreement, a “Reformulated Product” is a Product that is in compliance with the standard set forth in § 2.2, below. The warning requirement set forth in §§ 2.3 - 2.4 shall not apply to any Reformulated Product.

**2.2 Reformulation Standard.** “Reformulated Products” shall mean Products that expose a person to an exposure level of less than 0.5 micrograms of lead per serving size when analyzed pursuant to AOAC Official Method 2015.01. For the purpose of this Agreement, the amount of lead a person is exposed to from a Product shall be calculated using the following formula: micrograms of lead per gram of Product, multiplied by grams of Product per serving size of the Product (using the

largest serving size appearing on the Product label), multiplied by servings of the Product per day (using the largest number of servings in a recommended dosage appearing on the label), which equates to micrograms of lead exposure per day. If the Product label contains no recommended daily servings, then the number of recommended daily serving shall be one (1).

**2.3 Compliance.** If Bell believes that Gourmet International is not in compliance with the above Reformulation Standard, she may make a written request to Gourmet International for information establishing compliance. Upon receipt of such written notice, Gourmet International shall either produce any existing test results of the Product showing the amount of lead in the tested samples based on the AOAC methodology above, or undertake such testing of the Product within thirty (30) days of the written request by a testing laboratory using this methodology and accredited to test for food, and shall produce any additional information it believes supports its position. If Bell produces results of any Product testing in support of her request Gourmet International shall demonstrate that any results from its testing the Product are: 1) the same or sufficiently similar as that tested by Bell; and 2) from Product intended for sale in California.

The amount of lead shall be calculated by averaging the lead concentration levels reported on laboratory test results for each of three randomly selected samples of the Product using the arithmetic mean. This averaged result shall be controlling and considered the amount of lead for purposes of complying with § 2.2. If that averaged result is below 0.5 micrograms of lead using the above formula for calculation of exposure then Gourmet International shall be in compliance with § 2.2.

**2.4 Clear and Reasonable Warning.** Commencing within 60 days after the Effective Date, and continuing thereafter, a clear and reasonable exposure warning as set forth in this §§ 2.3 and 2.4 must be provided for all Products that Gourmet International manufacturers, imports, sells, or offers for sale in California, either directly or to a distributor Gourmet International knows will sell the Product to California that is not a Reformulated Product. There shall be no obligation for Gourmet International to provide an exposure warning for Products that entered the stream of commerce within 60 days after the Effective Date. The warning shall consist of either the **Warning** or **Alternative Warning** described in §§ 2.3(a) or (b), respectively:

(a) **Warning.** The “Warning” shall consist of the statement:

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

Gourmet International shall use the phrase “cancer and” in the **Warning** only if the daily lead exposure level is greater than 15 micrograms of lead as determined pursuant to the test methodology identified in § 2.2.

(b) **Alternative Warning:** Gourmet International may, but is not required to, use the alternative short-form warning as set forth in this § 2.3(b) (“**Alternative Warning**”) as follows:

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

**2.5** A **Warning** or **Alternative Warning** provided pursuant to § 2.3 must print the word “**WARNING:**” in all capital letters and in bold font, followed by a colon. The **Warning** or **Alternative Warning** shall be affixed to or printed on the Products’ packaging or labeling, or on a placard, shelf tag, sign or electronic device or automatic process, provided that the **Warning** or **Alternative 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. The **Warning** or **Alternative 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. Where the **Warning** or **Alternative Warning** is provided on the food product label, it must be set off from other surrounding information, and Gourmet International shall enclose the **Warning** or **Alternative Warning** in a black box and comply with the content requirements specified in Section 25607.2. If “consumer information,” as that term is defined in Title 27, California Code of Regulations, Section 25600.1(c) as it may be amended from time to time, is provided in a foreign language, Gourmet International shall provide the **Warning** or **Alternative Warning** in the foreign language in accordance with applicable warning regulations adopted by the State of California’s Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (“OEHHA”).

In addition to affixing the **Warning** or **Alternative Warning** to the Product's packaging or labeling, the **Warning** or **Alternative Warning** shall be posted on websites where Gourmet International offers Products for sale to consumers in California. The requirements of this Section shall be satisfied if the **Warning** or **Alternative Warning**, or a clearly marked hyperlink using the word "**WARNING**," appears on the product display page, or by otherwise prominently displaying the warning to the purchaser prior to completing the purchase. To comply with this Section, Gourmet International shall (a) post the **Warning** or **Alternative Warning** on its own website and, if it has the ability to do so, on the websites of its third-party internet sellers; and (b) if it does not have the ability to post the **Warning** or **Alternative Warning** on the websites of its third-party internet sellers, provide such sellers with written notice in accordance with Title 27, California Code of Regulations, Section 25600.2. Third-party internet sellers of the Product that have been provided with written notice in accordance with Title 27, California Code of Regulations, Section 25600.2 are not released in Section 5 of this Agreement if they fail to meet the warning requirements of this Section.

**2.6 Compliance with Warning Regulations.** The Parties agree that Gourmet International shall be deemed to be in compliance with this Settlement Agreement by either adhering to § 2 of this Settlement Agreement or by complying with warning regulations adopted by the State of California's OEHHA applicable to the Product and the exposure at issue within 60 days after the Effective Date.

**3. PENALTIES PURSUANT TO HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 25249.7(b)**

In settlement of all the claims referred to in this Settlement Agreement, Gourmet International shall pay \$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 Penalty remitted to OEHHA and the remaining 25% of the Penalty remitted to Bell. The Civil Penalty payment(s) shall be delivered to the addresses identified in § 3.2, below

**3.1 Civil Penalty.** Within sixty (60) business days of the Effective Date, Gourmet International shall issue two (2) separate checks for the Civil Penalty payment to (a) "OEHHA" in the

amount of \$375.00; and to (b) "Ema Bell" in the amount of \$125.00. The Civil Penalty payment(s) shall be delivered to the addresses identified in § 3.2, below.

**3.2 Payment Procedures.**

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

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

Evan J. Smith, Esquire  
Brodsky Smith  
Two Bala Plaza, Suite 805  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

(ii) All payments owed to OEHHA (EIN: 68-0284486), pursuant to § 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.** Gourmet International agrees to provide Bell's counsel with a copy of the checks payable to OEHHA, simultaneous with its penalty payments to Bell, to be delivered to the address provided in § 3.2(a)(i), as proof of payment to OEHHA.

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

(i) “Ema Bell” 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” (EIN: 23-2971061) at the address provided in Section 3.2(a)(i); and

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

#### **4. REIMBURSEMENT OF FEES AND COSTS**

The Parties acknowledge that Bell and her 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 Bell and her 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, Gourmet International shall reimburse Bell’s counsel for fees and costs incurred as a result of investigating and bringing this matter to the attention of Gourmet International, and negotiating a settlement in the public interest. Within sixty(60) business days of the Effective Date, Gourmet International shall issue a check payable to “Brodsky Smith” in the amount of \$10,500.00 for delivery to the address identified in § 3.2(a)(i), above.

#### **5. RELEASE OF ALL CLAIMS**

**5.1 Release of Gourmet International and Downstream Customers and Entities.** This Settlement Agreement is a full, final and binding resolution between Bell, acting on her own behalf, and Gourmet International, of any violation of Proposition 65 that was or could have been asserted by Bell or on behalf of her past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, successors, and/or assigns (“Releasers”) for failure to provide warnings for alleged exposures to lead from use of the Products, and Releasers hereby release any such claims against Gourmet International and its parents, subsidiaries, affiliated entities, shareholders, marketplaces, directors, officers, agents, employees, attorneys, successors and assignees, and each entity to whom Gourmet International directly or

indirectly distributes or sells the Products, including but not limited to, downstream distributors, wholesalers, customers, retailers, including but not limited to World Market, its respective subsidiaries, affiliates and parents, franchisees, cooperative members and licensees (collectively, the "Releasees"), from all claims for violations of Proposition 65 through 60 days after the Effective Date based on exposure to lead from use of the Products.

In further consideration of the promises and agreements herein contained, and for the payments to be made pursuant to §§ 3 and 4 above, Bell, on behalf of herself, her 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 she 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 lead from use of the Products.

**5.2 Gourmet International's Release of Bell.** Gourmet International, on behalf of itself, its past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, successors and/or assignees, hereby waives any and all claims against Bell, her attorneys and other representatives, for any and all actions taken or statements made (or those that could have been taken or made) by Bell 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 exposure to lead from the Products.

**5.3 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. Bell on behalf of herself only, on one hand, and Gourmet International, on the other hand, acknowledge that this Agreement is expressly intended to cover and include all such claims up through 60 days after the Effective Date, including all rights of action therefor. The Parties acknowledge that the claims released in §§ 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 THAT THE CREDITOR OR RELEASING PARTY DOES NOT KNOW OR SUSPECT TO EXIST IN HER OR HER FAVOR AT THE TIME OF EXECUTING THE RELEASE AND THAT, IF KNOWN BY HIM OR HER, WOULD HAVE MATERIALLY AFFECTED HER OR HER SETTLEMENT WITH THE DEBTOR OR RELEASED PARTY.

Bell and Gourmet International each acknowledge and understand the significance and consequences of this specific waiver of California Civil Code § 1542.

**5.4 Deemed Compliance with Proposition 65.** The Parties agree that compliance by Gourmet International with this Settlement Agreement constitutes compliance with Proposition 65 with respect to exposure to lead from use of the Products.

**6. 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.

**7. 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, Gourmet International shall provide written notice to Bell 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.

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

For Gourmet International:

Dennis Raglin  
Steptoe LLP  
633 W. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Ste. 1900  
Los Angeles, CA 90071

For Bell:

Evan J. Smith  
Brodsky Smith  
Two Bala Plaza, Suite 805  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

Either 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: 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.

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

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

11. **MODIFICATION**

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

12. **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.

13. **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: 9 / 10 / 24

Date: 9/5/24

By:   
Ema Bell

By:   
Gourmet International, Ltd.