

SETTLEMENT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Parties. This Settlement Agreement is entered into by and between Gabriel Espinoza (“Espinoza”) and Season Brand LLC (“Season Brand”). Together, Espinoza and Season Brand are collectively referred to as the “Parties.” Espinoza is an individual who resides in the State of California, and allegedly seeks to promote awareness of exposures to toxic chemicals and to improve human health by reducing or eliminating hazardous substances contained in consumer products. Espinoza alleges that Season Brand 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. Espinoza alleges that Season Brand has exposed individuals to lead from its sales of wild caught skinless and boneless sardines in olive oil products 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 wild caught skinless and boneless sardines in olive oil products (the “Product” or “Products”) that have been imported, distributed, offered for sale and/or sold in California by Season Brand.

1.4 Notice of Violation. On August 14, 2023, Espinoza served Sprouts Farmers Market, Inc., SFM, LLC (collectively, “Sprouts”), Henry’s Marketplace, Inc., Season Brand, 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 Season Brand and such others, including public enforcers, with notice that alleged that Season Brand 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. To the best of the parties’ knowledge, no public enforcer has diligently prosecuted 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 Season Brand's compliance with Proposition 65. Season Brand 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 Proposition 65 or any other statutory, regulatory, common law or equitable doctrine. Nothing in this Settlement Agreement shall be construed as an admission by Season Brand 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 Season Brand of any fact, finding, conclusion, issue of law or violation of law, such being specifically denied by Season Brand. 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, Season Brand 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

Beginning ninety (90) days after the Effective Date (the "Commencement Date"), Season Brand, at its sole discretion, agrees to either: (a) manufacture, import, or otherwise source for authorized sale in California only Reformulated Products, as defined pursuant to Section 2.1 below; or (b) provide a clear and reasonable Proposition 65 warning on the Products pursuant to Section 2.2 below.

2.1 Reformulation Standards. The Products shall be deemed to comply with Proposition 65 with regard to lead and be exempt from any Proposition 65 warning requirements for lead in the Products does not exceed 0.5 micrograms of lead per day ("Reformulated Products"). Products that were supplied or contracted to be supplied to third parties by Season Brand prior to the Commencement 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.

For the Purpose of this Agreement, the amount of lead a person is exposed to from the Products shall be calculated using the following formula: micrograms of lead per gram of product, multiplied by grams of product per serving 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 recommended dosage appearing on the product label), which equals micrograms of lead exposure per day.

2.2 Clear and Reasonable Warning. 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 this Section 2.2. This warning requirement shall only be required as to Products that are directly manufactured, distributed, marketed, imported, sold, shipped for sale or offered for sale to consumers by Season Brand in the State of California and/or placed into the stream of commerce by Season Brand after the Commencement Date. No Proposition 65 warning shall be required for any Products that are supplied or contracted to be supplied to third parties by Season Brand prior to the Commencement Date, and all such Products are hereby deemed to be exempt from Proposition 65 enforcement. Where required to meet the criteria set forth above in this Section 2.2, Season Brand shall display one of the following warning statements on the packaging label of the Products that do not meet the warning exemption standard set forth in Section 2.1 above:

(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.

(b) **Alternative Warning:** Season Brand may, but is not required to, use the alternative short-form warning as set forth in this § 2.1(b) (“**Alternative Warning**”) as follows:

WARNING: Cancer and Reproductive Harm - www.P65Warnings.ca.gov/food.

2.3 A **Warning** or **Alternative Warning** provided pursuant to § 2.2 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. 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, Season Brand 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 Season Brand 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, Season Brand 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.

2.4 Compliance with Warning Regulations. The Parties agree that Season Brand 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 after the Commencement Date. If Proposition 65 warnings for lead should no longer be required, Season Brand shall have no further obligations pursuant to this Settlement Agreement.

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

In settlement of all the claims referred to in this Settlement Agreement, Season Brand shall pay \$2,000.00 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 Espinoza. The Civil Penalty payment(s) shall be delivered to the addresses identified in § 3.2, below

3.1 Civil Penalty. Within fifteen (15) business days of the Effective Date, Season Brand shall issue two (2) separate checks for the Civil Penalty payment to (a) "OEHHA" in the amount of \$1,500.00; and to (b) "Gabriel Espinoza" in the amount of \$500.00. 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 Espinoza, 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. Season Brand agrees to provide Espinoza's counsel with a copy of the checks payable to OEHHA, simultaneous with its penalty payments to Espinoza, to be delivered to the address provided in § 3.2(a)(i), as proof of payment to OEHHA.

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

(i) "Gabriel Espinoza" 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 Espinoza and his 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 Espinoza and his 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, Season Brand shall reimburse Espinoza's counsel for fees and costs incurred as a result of investigating and bringing this matter to the attention of Season Brand, and negotiating a settlement in the public interest. Within fifteen (15) business days of the Effective Date, Season Brand shall issue a check payable to "Brodsky Smith" in the amount of \$23,000.00 for delivery to the address identified in § 3.2(a)(i), above.

5. RELEASE OF ALL CLAIMS

5.1 Release of Season Brand and Downstream Customers and Entities. This Settlement Agreement is a full, final and binding resolution between Espinoza, acting on his own behalf, and Season Brand, for all claims for injunctive relief or damages, penalties, fines, sanctions, mitigation, fees (including fees of attorneys, experts, and others), costs, expenses, claims, causes of action, or any other sum that has been or could have been incurred or claimed by Espinoza, on his own behalf, on behalf of his past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, successors and assignees, against Season Brand and each of its respective parents, subsidiaries, affiliated entities under common ownership, directors, officers, members, employees, attorneys, and any entity, including, but not limited to, each person or entity to whom Season Brand directly or indirectly distributes or sells the Products, including, but not limited to, its downstream manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, customers, retailers, Sprouts, franchisees, cooperative members and licensees ("Releasees"), arising out of or related to any alleged violation of Proposition 65, or any alleged violation of statute or common law arising from alleged exposures to the lead in relation to the Products, through the Effective Date, or within 90 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, Espinoza, on behalf of himself, his 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 he 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 Season Brand's Release of Espinoza. Season Brand's, on behalf of itself, its past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, successors and/or assignees, hereby waives any and all claims against Espinoza, his attorneys and other representatives, for any and all actions taken or statements made (or those that could have been taken or made) by Espinoza and/or his 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. Espinoza on behalf of himself only, on one hand, and Season Brand, on behalf of itself only, on the other hand, acknowledge that this Agreement is expressly intended to cover and include all such claims up through 90 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.

Espinoza and Season Brand 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 Season Brand with this Settlement Agreement constitutes compliance with Proposition 65 with respect to exposure to lead from use of the Products.

6. PUBLIC BENEFIT

It is Season Brand's understanding that the commitments it has agreed to herein, and actions to be taken by Season Brand under this Settlement Agreement, confer a significant benefit to the general public, as set forth in Code of Civil Procedure § 1021.5 and Cal. Admin. Code tit. 11, § 3201. As such, it is the intent of Season Brand that to the extent any other private party serves a notice and/or initiates an action alleging a violation of Proposition 65 with respect to Season Brand's alleged failure to provide a warning concerning actual or alleged exposure to lead prior to use of the Products it has or will distribute into the State of California, such private party action would not confer a significant benefit on the general public as those Products addressed in this Settlement Agreement, provided that Season Brand is in compliance with this Settlement Agreement.

7. 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.

8. 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, Season Brand 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 or two-day courier on any party by the other party to the following addresses:

For Season Brand:

Jonathan E. Temchin
Tarter Krinsky & Drogin LLP
1350 Broadway,
New York, NY 10018

For Espinoza:

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)

Espinoza 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: _____

Date: 5/29/2024

By: _____
Gabriel Espinoza

By: Jordan Howard
Season Brand LLC

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: 6/5/24

Date: _____

By: 
Gabriel Espinoza

By: _____
Season Brand LLC