

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Parties

This Settlement Agreement is entered into by and between Environmental Health Advocates, Inc. (“EHA”), on the one hand, and C. H. Guenther & Son LLC (“Guenther”), on the other hand, with EHA and Guenther each individually referred to as a “Party” and collectively as the “Parties.” EHA is a corporation in the State of California serving in the interest of the general public by seeking to promote awareness of exposures to toxic chemicals and to improve human health by reducing or eliminating hazardous substances used in consumer products. EHA alleges that Guenther 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 § 25249.6 *et seq.* (“Proposition 65”).

1.2 General Allegations

EHA alleges that Guenther manufactures, sells, and/or distributes for sale in California, soup mix products that contain Lead and that it does so without first providing the health hazard warning required by Proposition 65. Lead is listed pursuant to Proposition 65 as a chemical known to cause cancer and developmental/reproductive harm.

1.3 Product Description

The products covered by this Settlement Agreement are defined as, and expressly limited to Sun-Bird Hot & Sour Soup Mix (the “Covered Products”), that are manufactured, sold and/or distributed for sale in California by Guenther.

1.4 Notice of Violation

EHA alleges that on or around October 20, 2023, EHA served Guenther, the California Attorney General, and certain other public enforcement agencies with a 60-Day Notice of Violation of Proposition 65 (“Notice”). The Notice alleged that Guenther had violated Proposition 65 by failing to sufficiently warn consumers in California of the health hazards associated with exposures to lead contained in the Covered Products.

To the best of the parties’ knowledge, no public enforcer has commenced or is otherwise

prosecuting an action to enforce the violations alleged in the Notice.

1.5 No Admission

01/28/2017
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Guenther 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 Covered Products, have been, and are, in compliance with all laws. Nothing in this Settlement Agreement shall be construed as an admission by Guenther 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 Guenther of any fact, finding, conclusion, issue of law or violation of law, such being specifically denied by Guenther. This Section shall not, however, diminish or otherwise affect Guenther'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 this Settlement Agreement is executed by the Parties.

1.7 Compliance Date

For purposes of this Settlement, the term “Compliance Date” means 30 days from the Effective Date.

2. INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

2.1 Reformulation Standard

Beginning on or before the Compliance Date, Guenther shall be permanently enjoined from manufacturing, distributing, or directly selling in the State of California, any Covered Product that exposes a person to a “Daily Lead Exposure Level” of more than 0.5 micrograms of Lead based on a single serving per day unless such Covered Products comply with the warning requirements of Section 2.2. The “Daily Lead Exposure Level” shall be calculated by multiplying the recommended serving size in the Covered Product by the concentration of Lead in the Covered Products. As used in this Section 2, “distributed for sale in CA” means to directly ship Covered Products into California or to sell Covered Products to a distributor Guenther knows will sell Covered Products in California.

2.2 General Warning Requirements

Commencing on the Compliance Date, Guenther agrees any Covered Product sold that was not reformulated pursuant to paragraph 2.1 shall contain a Proposition 65 warning. Guenther 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* Covered Products 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 Covered Products shall consist of a warning affixed to the packaging, label, tag, directly to each Covered Product sold in California by Guenther, or on a placard, shelf tag, sign, electronic device, or automatic process that contains one of the following statements:

1) **WARNING:** Consuming this product can expose you to chemicals including Lead, which are 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.

OR

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

This warning statement shall be prominently displayed on the Covered Products, on the packing of the Covered Products, or on a placard, shelf tag, or sign, provided that the statement 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 prior to sale. If the warning statement is displayed on the Covered Products' packaging, it must be in a type size no smaller than the largest type size used for other consumer information on the product. In no case shall a warning statement displayed on the Covered Products' packaging appear in a type size smaller than 6-point type. If the Covered Products' packaging contains consumer information in a foreign language, a warning statement in that language is required. The same warning, or a hyperlink to the warning

using the word, “WARNING,” shall be posted on any websites under the exclusive control of Guenther from which Covered Products are sold into California. Guenther shall also instruct any third-party website to which it sells its Covered Products to include the same warning as a condition of selling the Covered Products. Such warning shall constitute compliance with Proposition 65 with respect to the Listed Chemical in the Covered Products for any Covered Products in existing inventory that had not been reformulated and were distributed and/or sold by Guenther or any of the Releasees after the Effective Date. There shall be no obligation for Guenther to provide a warning for Covered Products that entered the stream of commerce prior to the Effective Date, and the Section 4 release applies to all such Covered Products.

(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 Proposition 65 warning text and/or methods of transmission applicable to the Covered Products and the chemical at issue, which are different than those set forth above, Guenther 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 or legislation are enacted providing that Proposition 65 warnings as to Lead in this product are no longer required, a lack of warning by Guenther will not thereafter be a breach of this Agreement.

2.3 Grace Period for Existing Inventory of Covered Products

The injunctive requirements of Section 2 shall not apply to Covered Products that are already in the stream of commerce as of the Effective Date, which Covered Products are expressly subject to the releases provided in Section 4.1. For the avoidance of doubt, Covered Products in the stream of commerce specifically include, but are not limited to, Covered Products in the process of manufacture.

3. MONETARY SETTLEMENT TERMS

3.1 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, Guenther agrees to pay two thousand (\$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 EHA. Guenther shall issue two separate checks for the initial civil penalty payment to (a) “OEHHA” and (b) Environmental Health Advocates, Inc. as follows:

- One payment of \$1,500.00 to OEHHA, due 14 days after the Effective Date and after receipt of all W-9 forms.
- One payment of \$500.00 to Environmental Health Advocates, Inc., due 14 days after the Effective Date and after receipt of all W-9 forms.

All payments owed to OEHHA (EIN: 68-0284486), pursuant to this Section 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

All penalty payments owed to EHA shall be sent to:

Isaac Fayman
Environmental Health Advocates, Inc.
225 Broadway, Suite 1900
San Diego, CA 92101

3.2 Attorney Fees and Costs

The Parties reached an accord on the compensation due to EHA and its counsel under the private attorney general doctrine and principles of contract law. Under these legal principles, Guenther agrees to pay twenty three thousand dollars (\$23,000.00) to EHA and its counsel for all

fees and costs incurred in investigating, bringing this matter to the attention of Guenther, and negotiating a settlement. This payment shall be payable to Entorno Law, LLP, due 14 days after the Effective Date and after receipt of all W-9 forms.

All payments required under this Section shall be delivered to:

Noam Glick
Entorno Law, LLP
225 Broadway, Suite 1900
San Diego, CA 92101

3.3 Tax Documentation

Guenther agrees to provide a completed IRS 1099 for its payments to, and EHA agrees to provide IRS W-9 forms for, each of the payees under this Settlement Agreement. The Parties acknowledge that Guenther cannot issue any settlement payments pursuant to Section 3.1 and 3.2 above until after Guenther receives the requisite W-9 forms from EHA's counsel.

4. CLAIMS COVERED AND RELEASED

4.1 EHA's Release of Guenther

This Settlement Agreement is a full, final, and binding resolution of all claims between EHA, on its own behalf and not on behalf of the public, and Guenther for all claims that can or could have been asserted by EHA, on its own behalf, or on behalf of its past, current, and future agents, representatives, attorneys, successors, assignees, insurers, trustees, grantees, devisees, affiliates, or any other entities in which EHA has interest, against Guenther and each of its respective parents, successors, subsidiaries, partners, joint venturers, advisors, consultants, servicers, commonly-controlled entities, affiliated entities of any nature, divisions, vendors, manufacturers, suppliers, licensors, directors, officers, members, employees, attorneys, and any entity, including, but not limited to each entity to whom Guenther directly or indirectly distributes or sells the Covered Products, including, but not limited to, its downstream distributors, wholesalers, customers, retailers (including but not limited to Stater Bros. Markets), franchisees, cooperative members, and licensees ("Releasees"), based on the failure to warn about exposures to lead required under Proposition 65 in the Covered Products manufactured, sold or distributed for sale in California by Guenther before the Effective Date, as alleged in the Notice, or for any other

reason.

In further consideration of the promises and agreements herein contained, EHA on its own behalf and not on behalf of the public, on behalf of its past, current, and future agents, representatives, attorneys, successors assignees, insurers, trustees, grantees, devisees, affiliates, or any other entities in which EHA has an interest, hereby waives any and all rights it may have to institute or participate in, directly or indirectly, any form of legal action and releases all claims against Guenther and Releasees including, without limitation, all actions, claims, causes of action, suits, liabilities, demands, obligations, damages, costs, fines, penalties, rights, bonds, bills, losses, or expenses, including, but not limited to, investigation fees, expert fees, and attorney fees arising under Proposition 65 with respect to the alleged or actual failure to warn about exposures to Lead required under Proposition 65 in the Covered Products manufactured, distributed, sold or offered for sale by Guenther, before the Effective Date.

4.2 Guenther's Release of EHA

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

4.3 California Civil Code Section 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 Covered Products will develop or be discovered. EHA on behalf of itself only, on one hand, and Guenther on behalf of itself only, on the other hand, acknowledge that this Settlement Agreement is expressly intended to cover and include all such claims up through the Effective Date. The Parties acknowledge that the claims released in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 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.

EHA and Guenther each acknowledge and understand the significance and consequences of this specific waiver of California Civil Code § 1542.

5 PUBLIC BENEFIT

It is Guenther's understanding that the commitments it has agreed to herein, and actions to be taken by Guenther 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 Guenther 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 Guenther's alleged failure to provide a warning concerning actual or alleged exposure to Lead prior to use of the Covered Products it has manufactured, distributed, sold, or offered for sale in California, or will manufacture, distribute, sell, or offer for sale in California, such private party action would not confer a significant benefit on the general public as to those Covered Products addressed in this Settlement Agreement, provided that Guenther is in material compliance with this Settlement Agreement.

6. SEVERABILITY

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

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.

8. ENFORCEMENT

In any action to enforce the terms of this Settlement Agreement, the prevailing party shall be entitled to its reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.

9. 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 Guenther:

Nury Helena Yoo
Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP
Four Embarcadero Center, 27th Floor
San Francisco, CA 9411
nury.yoo@faegredrinker.com

For EHA:

Noam Glick
Entorno Law, LLP
225 Broadway, Suite 1900
San Diego, CA 92101
noam@entornolaw.com

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.

10. 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.

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

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

12. MODIFICATION


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

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: 03/28/2024

By: 
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
ADVOCATES, INC.

AGREED TO:

Date: 4/1/2024

By: 
C. H. GUENTHER & SON LLC