

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Parties. This Settlement Agreement is entered into by and between Gabriel Espinoza (“Espinoza”) and Topco Associates, LLC (“Topco”). Together, Espinoza and Topco are collectively referred to as the “Parties.” Espinoza alleges that Topco 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 Topco has exposed individuals to diethanolamine (“DEA”) from its sales of *Top Care*® everyday after sun moisturizing lotions with aloe vera without first providing users and consumers of the product with a clear and reasonable Proposition 65 warning. DEA is listed under Proposition 65 as a chemical known to the State of California to cause cancer.

1.3 Product Description. The products covered by this Settlement Agreement are after sun lotions and gels containing aloe vera that Releasees have manufactured, imported, distributed, offered for sale, and/or sold in California (the Products).¹

1.4 Notice of Violation. On September 26, 2024, Espinoza served Stater Bros Markets (“Stater”), Topco, and various public enforcement agencies with documents entitled “Notice of Violation of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.6, et seq.” (the “Notice”). The Notice provided Topco and such others, including public enforcers, with notice that alleged that Topco 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 DEA. No public enforcer has diligently prosecuted the allegations set forth in the Notice.

1.5 No Admission. Topco 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 against interest by Topco of

¹ Burn relief gels/creams & sunscreens including, but not limited to, Kroger Sport Sunscreen and CVS Health Burn Relief Gel, are specifically excluded from the **Product Description**.

any fact, finding, issue of law, or violation of law; nor shall compliance with this Settlement Agreement constitute or be construed as an admission against interest by Topco of any fact, finding, conclusion, issue of law or violation of law, such being specifically denied by Topco. 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, Topco 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 that both Parties have notice that this Settlement Agreement is fully executed.

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 Topco directly manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, or offers for sale in 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 and 2.4, below. For purposes of this Settlement Agreement, a “DEA Free Reformulated Product” is a Product that is in compliance with the standard set forth in § 2.2, below. The warning requirements set forth in §§ 2.3 and 2.4 shall not apply to any DEA Free Reformulated Product or to any Product manufactured prior to the Effective Date, and or that has entered the stream of commerce prior to the Effective Date.


2.2 DEA Free Reformulation Standard. To qualify as a “DEA Free Reformulated Product” the Product must meet the following standard: DEA content that is not detectable (i.e., zero) or below the Reporting Limit (defined herein) when analyzed pursuant to liquid chromatography/tandem mass spectrometry (LC/MS/MS), inductively coupled mass-spectroscopy (ICP-MS) or other method of analysis utilized by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) for qualitative and quantitative screening of cosmetics and cosmetic raw materials.

2.2.1 Reporting Limit. The “Reporting Limit²” is 20 mg/kg.


² The “Reporting Limit” the lowest concentration at which DEA can be detected in a sample of a Product by an accredited testing laboratory employing LC/MS/MS analysis or other method of analysis utilized by the ISO for qualitative and quantitative screening of cosmetics and cosmetic raw materials.

2.3 Clear and Reasonable Warning. Commencing within 60 days after the Effective Date, and continuing thereafter, except as set forth in § 2.2, a clear and reasonable exposure warning as set forth in this §§ 2.3 and 2.4 must be provided for all Products that Topco manufacturers, imports, distributes, sells, or offers for sale in California that is not a DEA Free Reformulated Product. 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:** This product can expose you to chemicals including diethanolamine (DEA), which is known to the State of California to cause cancer. For more information go to www.P65Warnings.ca.gov.

(b) **Alternative Warning:** Topco may, but is not required to, use the alternative short-form warning³ as set forth in this § 2.3(b) (“**Alternative Warning**”) as follows:

 **WARNING:** Cancer - www.P65Warnings.ca.gov.

2.4 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 symbol to the left of the word “**WARNING:**” must be a black exclamation point in a yellow equilateral triangle with a black outline, except that if the sign or label for the Products does not use the color yellow, the symbol may be in black and white. The symbol must be in a size no smaller than the height of the word “**WARNING:**”. 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 only if such electronic device or automatic process provides the **Warning** or **Alternative Warning** without the purchaser having to seek it out, 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

³ An **Alternative Warning** on a Product manufactured and labeled after January 1, 2028 shall be provided in accordance with Title 27, California Code of Regulations, § 25603(b).

“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, Topco 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 Products’ packaging or labeling, the **Warning** or **Alternative Warning** shall be posted on websites where Topco 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, Topco 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.

2.5 Compliance with Warning Regulations. The Parties agree that Topco shall be deemed to be in compliance with Proposition 65 and 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 exposures at issue.

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

In settlement of all the claims referred to in this Settlement Agreement, Topco shall pay \$3,000.00 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. For all amounts due and owing that are not sent within the payment times set forth below, Topco shall pay a late civil penalty payment fee equal to \$100/day to be allocated in accordance with California Health & Safety Code § 25249.12(c)(1) and (d).

3.1 Civil Penalty. Within ten (10) business days of the Effective Date, Topco shall issue two (2) separate checks for the Civil Penalty payment: (a) one to “OEHHA” in the amount of \$2,250.00; and one to (b) “Gabriel Espinoza” in the amount of \$750.00. 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.** Topco agrees to provide Espinoza's counsel with a copy of the check payable to OEHHA, simultaneously with its penalty payment to Espinoza, to be delivered to the address provided in § 3.2(a)(i), as proof of payment to OEHHA.

(c) **Tax Documentation.** Topco 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) calendar days of the Effective Date;

(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 Effective Date. Under these legal principles, Topco shall reimburse Espinoza's counsel for fees and costs incurred as a result of investigating and bringing this matter to the attention of Topco, and negotiating a settlement in the public interest. Within ten (10) business days of the Effective Date, Topco shall send a check payable to "Brodsky Smith" in the amount of \$37,000.00 for delivery to the address identified in § 3.2(a)(i), above.

5. **RELEASE OF ALL CLAIMS**

5.1 Release of Topco and Downstream Customers and Entities. This Settlement Agreement is a full, final and binding resolution between Espinoza, acting on his own behalf, and

Topco, of any violation of Proposition 65 that was or could have been asserted by Espinoza or on behalf of his past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, successors, and/or assigns (“Releasors”) for failure to provide warnings for alleged exposures to DEA from use of the Products, and Releasors hereby release any such claims against Topco and its parents, subsidiaries, affiliated entities, shareholders, marketplaces, directors, officers, agents, employees, attorneys, successors and assignees, all manufacturers of the Products, and each entity to whom Topco directly or indirectly distributes or sells the Products, including but not limited to, downstream distributors, wholesalers, customers, retailers, including but not limited to Stater and any retailer that sells Products purchased from Topco or its authorized distributors, and its respective subsidiaries, affiliates and parents, franchisees, cooperative members and licensees (collectively, the “Releasees”), from all claims for violations of Proposition 65 based on exposure to DEA from use of the Products. For clarity, this release specifically includes Vi-Jon, LLC, its affiliates, and any entity that manufactures or distributes products using the same or substantially similar formulation as the Products, including those sold under private label arrangements to third parties, regardless of the brand name under which the products are ultimately sold. Vi-Jon, LLC and any entity that manufactures or distributes products using the same or substantially similar formulation are intended third-party beneficiaries with full rights to enforce this Agreement.

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, civil penalties, 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 DEA from use of the Products.

5.2 Protection for Similar Products. The Parties agree that this release extends to any products manufactured by Vi-Jon, LLC or its affiliates that contain the same or substantially similar formulation as the Products, regardless of the customer, brand, or label under which they are sold.

5.3 Topco's Release of Espinoza. Topco, 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 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 DEA from use of the Products through 60 days after the Effective Date.

5.4 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 the one hand, and Topco, 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 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.

Espinoza and Topco each respectively acknowledge and understand the significance and consequences of this specific waiver of California Civil Code § 1542.

5.5 Deemed Compliance with Proposition 65. The Parties agree that compliance by Topco with this Settlement Agreement constitutes compliance with Proposition 65 with respect to exposure to DEA from use of the Products.

5.6 Public Benefit. It is the Parties' understanding that the commitments Topco has agreed to herein, and the actions to be taken by Topco under this Settlement Agreement, including payment

of a civil penalty, would 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 the Parties that, to the extent any other private party initiates an action alleging a violation of Proposition 65 with respect to Topco's failure to provide a warning concerning exposure to DEA prior to use of the 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 Products addressed in this Settlement Agreement, provided that Topco is in material compliance with this Settlement Agreement.

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.

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 Topco:

Thomas V. Wynsma
Shook, Hardy, & Bacon LLP
5 Park Plaza, Ste. 1600
Irvine, CA 92614

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 inures to the benefit of the Parties' respective successors and assigns. This Settlement Agreement may be modified by written agreement of the Parties. While Espinoza has a right to oppose any such modification, Espinoza agrees not to withhold approval without good cause shown. If 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, Topco shall be entitled to use, at its discretion, such other warning text and/or method of transmission without being deemed in breach of this Settlement Agreement. If, after the Effective Date, a California Court of Appeal or the California Supreme Court holds that Proposition 65 warnings are not required for consumer products containing DEA at or above the Reporting Limit specified in Section 2.2.1, Releasees may use the Court approved reporting limit for purposes of Section 2.2.1. If regulations or legislation are enacted or issued providing that a Proposition 65 warning for the Products is no longer required, a lack of warning will not thereafter be a breach of this Settlement Agreement.

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.

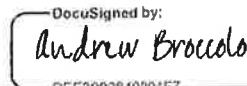
AGREED TO:

Date: 8 | 12 | 25

By: 
Gabriel Espinoza

AGREED TO:

Date: 8/8/2025

By: 
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Topco Associates, LLC