

SETTLEMENT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Ecological Alliance, LLC and Upper Echelon Products, LLC

This Settlement Agreement is entered into by and between Ecological Alliance, LLC ("Alliance"), on the one hand, and Upper Echelon Products, LLC ("Upper Echelon"), on the other hand, with Alliance and Upper Echelon collectively referred to as the "Parties."

1.2. General Allegations

Alliance alleges that Upper Echelon manufactured and/or distributed and/or offered for sale in the State of California Repel travel umbrellas, that allegedly contain Perfluorooctanoic Acid ["PFOA"] ("Products") and that such sales have not included warnings pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, California Health & Safety Code sections 25249.6 *et seq.* ("Proposition 65"). California has identified and listed PFOA under Proposition 65 as a chemical known to the State of California to cause cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm.

1.3. Product Description

The Products that are covered by this Settlement Agreement are defined as Repel travel umbrellas, that allegedly contain PFOA that Upper Echelon, its subsidiaries, affiliates, related companies, or distributors have sold, offered for sale or distributed in California.

1.4. Notice of Violation

On May 16, 2024, Alliance served Amazon.com, Inc., and the requisite public enforcement agencies eligible to initiate Proposition 65 actions on behalf of the People of the State of California with documents entitled "60-Day Notice of Violation" ("Notice") that provided Upper Echelon and such public enforcers with notice that Upper Echelon was allegedly

in violation of California Health & Safety Code section 25249.6 for failing to warn consumers and customers that the Product exposed users in California to PFOA. To the best of the Parties' knowledge, no public enforcer has commenced or is diligently prosecuting 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 Upper Echelon's compliance with Proposition 65. Specifically, Upper Echelon denies the material factual and legal allegations contained in Alliance's Notice and maintains that all Products that it has manufactured for sale and distribution in California, including the Products, have been and are in compliance with Proposition 65 and every applicable other statutory, regulatory, common law or equitable doctrine. Nothing in this Settlement Agreement shall be construed as an admission by Upper Echelon 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 Upper Echelon of any fact, finding, conclusion, issue of law, or violation of law, such being specifically denied by Upper Echelon. Upper Echelon enters into this Agreement merely to avoid the expense litigation. However, nothing in this section shall diminish or otherwise affect the obligations, responsibilities, and duties of Upper Echelon 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 fully executed.

2. **INJUNCTIVE RELIEF: WARNING**


2.1. **Warning**


Upper Echelon shall not sell into, nor manufacture, distribute, or offer for sale in, California any Products that knowingly contain any intentionally added PFOA, unless Upper Echelon complies with Section 2.2 below. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in no case shall any Products that are already in the stream of commerce as of the Effective Date, or enter into the stream of commerce within 90 days after the Effective Date, be subject to any Proposition 65 warning requirement, including but not limited to those in this Section and Section 2.2 below.

2.2. **Warning Language**

Where required, Upper Echelon shall provide Proposition 65 warnings as follows on the Products:

- (a) Upper Echelon may use any of the following warning statements in full compliance with this Section:

(1)  **WARNING:** This product can expose you to Perfluorooctanoic Acid [PFOA], which is known to the State of California to cause cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm. For more info go to www.P65Warnings.ca.gov.

(2)  **WARNING:** Risk of Cancer and Reproductive Harm from exposure to Perfluorooctanoic Acid [PFOA]. See www.P65Warnings.ca.gov.

- (b) Where the sign, label or shelf tag for the product is not printed using the color yellow, the symbol

may be printed in black and white. The symbol shall be placed to the left of the text of the warning, in a size no smaller than the height of the word "WARNING".

(c) The requirements for warnings, set forth in subsection (a) above are imposed pursuant to the terms of this Settlement Agreement. The Parties recognize that these are not the exclusive methods of providing a warning under Proposition 65 and its implementing regulations.

(d) Foreign Languages. Additionally, if a Product's labeling is provided in a language other than English, the warning will be provided in that language in addition to English.

(e) Online Sales. If International Upper Echelon sells Products via an internet website it controls to consumers located in California, the warning requirements of this section shall be satisfied if the foregoing warning appears either: (a) on the same web page on which a Product is displayed and/or described; (b) on the same page as the price for the Products; (c) on one or more web pages displayed to a California purchaser prior to purchase during the checkout process; or (d) via a hyperlink taking the customer to a separate page containing the warning language, provided that the hyperlink appears on the same page as either the product description or product price are displayed, or appears prior to completion of the sale at checkout. Alternatively, a symbol consisting of a black exclamation point in a yellow or white equilateral triangle may appear adjacent to or immediately following the display, description, price, or checkout listing of the Products, if the

warning statement appears elsewhere on the same web page in a manner that clearly associates it with the product(s) to which the warning applies.

(f) If Proposition 65 warnings for PFOA should no longer be required, Upper Echelon shall have no further obligations pursuant to this Settlement Agreement.

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

In settlement of all the claims referred to in this Settlement Agreement, Upper Echelon shall pay a total of \$500 in civil penalties in accordance with this Section. The penalty payment will be allocated in accordance with California Health & Safety Code section 25249.12(c)(1) & (d), with 75% of the funds remitted to the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment ("OEHHA") and the remaining 25% of the penalty remitted to Alliance. Alliance's counsel shall be responsible for delivering OEHHA's portion of any penalty payment made under this Settlement Agreement and provide Upper Echelon counsel with confirmation of such delivery at the time it is made pursuant to Paragraph 8 below.

4. REIMBURSEMENT OF FEES AND COSTS

The Parties reached an accord on the compensation due to Alliance and its counsel under the private attorney general doctrine and principles of contract law. Under these legal principles, Upper Echelon shall reimburse Alliance's counsel for fees and costs, incurred because of investigating and bringing this matter to Upper Echelon's attention. Upper Echelon shall pay Alliance's counsel \$16,000 for all attorneys' fees, expert and investigation fees, and related costs associated with this matter and the Notice.

5. PAYMENT INFORMATION

By May 9, 2025, Upper Echelon shall make a total payment of Sixteen Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$16,500) for the civil penalties and attorney's fees / costs by wire transfer to Plaintiff's counsel Custodio & Dubey LLP:

Bank: Bank of America, N.A.

Routing No.: 026009593

Account No.: 325149324377

Beneficiary: Custodio & Dubey LLP

Custodio & Dubey shall be responsible for distributing this payment in compliance with Sections 3 and 4 of this Agreement. Other than this payment, each side is to bear its own attorneys' fees and costs.

6. RELEASE OF ALL CLAIMS

6.1. Release of Upper Echelon, Downstream Customers and Upstream Vendors

In further consideration of the promises and agreements herein contained, including but not limited to the payments to be made pursuant to Sections 3 and 4 above, Alliance, on behalf of itself, its past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, successors and/or assignees, hereby waives all rights to institute or participate in, directly or indirectly, any form of legal action and releases all claims relating to the Products, including, without limitation, all actions, and causes of action, in law or in equity, suits, liabilities, demands, obligations, damages, costs, fines, penalties, losses or expenses (including, but not limited to, investigation fees, expert fees and attorneys' fees) of any nature whatsoever, whether known or unknown, fixed or contingent (collectively "Claims"), against Upper Echelon and each entity to whom Upper Echelon directly or indirectly distributes or sells the Products, including distributors, wholesalers, vendors,

licensors, licensees, auctioneers, retailers, franchisees, dealers, shareholders, cooperative members, customers, owners, purchasers, users, including but not limited to Amazon.com, Inc. (collectively with Upper Echelon, the "Releasees"), as well as each of the Releasees' respective sister and parent entities, subsidiaries, affiliated entities, shareholders, marketplaces, directors, officers, agents, employees, attorneys, successors, and assignees.

Alliance also, in its capacity, on behalf of itself, its past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, successors, and/or assignees and *not* in its representative capacity, provides a general release herein which shall be effective as a full and final accord and satisfaction, as a bar to all actions, causes of action, obligations, costs, expenses, attorneys' fees, damages, losses, claims, liabilities and demands of any nature, character or kind, known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected, against the Releasees. Alliance acknowledges that it is familiar with California Civil Code section 1542, which provides 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.

Alliance, in its capacity only, and on behalf of itself, its past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, successors, and/or assignees expressly waives and relinquishes any and all rights and benefits which it may have under, or which may be conferred on it by the provisions of California Civil Code section 1542 as well as under any other state or federal statute or common law principle of similar effect, to the fullest extent that it may lawfully waive such rights or benefits pertaining to the released matters.

6.2. Upper Echelon's Release of Alliance

Upper Echelon waives any and all claims against Alliance, its attorneys and other representatives, for any and all actions taken or statements made (or those that could have been taken or made) by Alliance and its attorneys and other representatives, whether in the course of investigating claims or otherwise seeking enforcement of Proposition 65 against it in this matter, and/or with respect to the Products.

7. PUBLIC BENEFIT

It is the Parties' belief that the terms of this Settlement Agreement confer a significant benefit to the general public as set forth in California Code of Civil Procedure section 1021.5 and California Administrative Code title 11, section 3201. As such, it is the intent of the Parties that to the extent any other private party initiates an action alleging that the Products are somehow in violation of Proposition 65, such private party action would not confer a significant benefit on the general public, so long as Upper Echelon is in material compliance with the terms of this Settlement Agreement.

8. 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. If Proposition 65 is repealed or is otherwise rendered inapplicable by reason of law generally, or as to the Products, then Upper Echelon shall have no further obligations pursuant to this Settlement Agreement.

9. 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: (a) first-

class, (registered or certified mail) return receipt requested; (ii.) email; or (iii) overnight courier on any party by the other party at the following addresses:

For Upper Echelon: Michael J. Stiles, Esq.
Stiles Pomeroy LLP
595 E. Colorado Blvd., Suite 211
Pasadena, CA 91101

mstiles@stilespomeroy.com

For Alliance: Vineet Dubey, Esq.
Custodio & Dubey LLP
445 S. Figueroa St., Suite 2520
Los Angeles, CA 90071

dubey@cd-lawyers.com

Any 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.

10. COUNTERPARTS; FACSIMILE/E-SIGNATURES

This Settlement Agreement may be executed in counterparts and by facsimile or e-signatures, 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 SECTION 25249.7(f)

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

12. ENTIRE AGREEMENT


This Settlement Agreement contains the sole and entire agreement and understanding of the Parties with respect to the entire subject matter hereof, and all related prior discussions, negotiations, commitments and understandings. No other agreements, oral or otherwise, exist to bind either of the Parties.

13. MODIFICATION

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

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.

<p style="text-align: center;">AGREED TO:</p> <p>Date: May 3, 2025</p> <p>By: </p> <p>On Behalf of Ecological Alliance, LLC</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">AGREED TO:</p> <p>Date: May 3, 2025</p> <p>By: _____</p> <p>On Behalf of Upper Echelon Products, LLC</p>
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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:	AGREED TO:
Date: May 3, 2025	Date: May 3, 2025
By: _____ On Behalf of Ecological Alliance, LLC	By: <u>Travis Killian</u> On Behalf of Upper Echelon Products, LLC