

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Parties

This Settlement Agreement is entered into by and between Dennis Johnson (“Johnson”) and Portico Designs Limited (“Portico Designs”), with Johnson and Portico Designs each individually referred to as a “Party” and collectively as the “Parties.” Johnson is an individual residing in the State of California who seeks to promote awareness of exposures to toxic chemicals and to improve human health by reducing or eliminating hazardous substances used in consumer products. Johnson alleges that Portico Designs 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 section 25249.6 *et seq.* (“Proposition 65”).

1.2 General Allegations

Johnson alleges that Portico Designs manufactures, sells, and/or distributes for sale in California, trays with surface decorations containing lead. Lead is listed pursuant to Proposition 65 as a chemical known to cause birth defects and other reproductive harm. Johnson alleges that Portico Designs failed to provide the health hazard warning required by Proposition 65 for exposures to lead.

1.3 Product Description

The products covered by this Settlement Agreement are all colors and sizes of the *Portico Designs Octopus Tray*, UPC: 5 020211 315798; SKU: BNARCHOCO8, that are manufactured, sold, or distributed for sale in California by Portico Designs (hereinafter referred to as “Products”).

1.4 Notice of Violation

On October 3, 2025, Johnson served Portico Designs, Barnes & Noble Booksellers, Inc. (together with its affiliates, “Barnes & Noble”), and the requisite public enforcement agencies with a 60-Day Notice of Violation, alleging that the notice

recipients violated Proposition 65 by failing to warn customers and consumers in California of the health hazards associated with exposures to lead from the Products. No public enforcer has commenced and is diligently prosecuting the allegations set forth in the Notice.

1.5 No Admission

Portico Designs denies for itself and on behalf of Barnes & Noble the material factual and legal allegations contained in the Notice and maintains that, to the best of its knowledge, all of the products that it has 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 Portico Designs or Barnes & Noble 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 Portico Designs or Barnes & Noble of any fact, finding, conclusion, issue of law, or violation of law, such being specifically denied by Portico Designs for itself and on behalf of Barnes & Noble. This Section shall not, however, diminish or otherwise affect Portico Designs' obligations, responsibilities, and duties under this Settlement Agreement.

Notwithstanding the allegations in the Notice, Portico Designs maintains for itself and on behalf of Barnes & Noble that it has not knowingly manufactured, or caused to be manufactured, the Products for sale in California in violation of Proposition 65. The Parties agree that Portico Designs is fully defending, indemnifying, and holding Barnes & Noble harmless with respect to any and all claims set forth in the Notice and that Portico Designs is responsible to Johnson for all matters set forth therein.

1.6 Effective Date

For purposes of this Settlement Agreement, the term "Effective Date" shall mean the date this Settlement Agreement is last executed by the Parties.

2. INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

2.1 Reformulation/Warning Commitment

Commencing within sixty (60) days after the Effective Date, and continuing thereafter, Portico Designs shall not manufacture, import, distribute, sell or offer the Products for sale in the State of California unless: (i) the Products are Reformulated Products pursuant to Section 2.2; or (ii) Portico Designs provides a clear and reasonable warning pursuant to Section 2.3. The Parties agree and intend that Portico Designs' compliance with the terms of this Settlement Agreement shall constitute compliance by Portico Designs with Proposition 65 with respect to exposures to Lead from the Products. The warning requirement set forth in Section 2.3 shall not apply to any Reformulated Product.

2.2 Reformulated Products.

"Reformulated Products" are defined as those Products that yield no more than 1.0 microgram of lead on any surface sampled and analyzed pursuant to the NIOSH 9100 testing protocol or equivalent methodologies used by state and federal agencies to determine lead content on a solid substance.

2.3 Warnings.

Commencing within 60 days after the Effective Date, and continuing thereafter, Portico Designs must provide a clear and reasonable warning, as set forth below, for all Products that Portico Designs manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, or offers for sale in California that do not meet the standard for Reformulated Products. There shall be no obligation for Portico Designs to provide an exposure warning for Products that entered the stream of commerce within 60 days after the Effective Date, as they have been included in the calculation of the civil penalties due pursuant to Section 3 below.

2.3.1 Warning Content. For purposes of this Settlement Agreement, the parties agree that a clear and reasonable warning shall consist of one of the following warning statements:

 **WARNING:** Risk of cancer and reproductive harm from exposure to lead.
See www.P65Warnings.ca.gov

OR

 **WARNING:** Can expose you to lead, a carcinogen and reproductive toxicant.
See www.P65Warnings.ca.gov

OR

 **WARNING:** 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

The above warning statements 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:**”.

2.3.2 Method of Transmission

Product Labeling. Portico Designs shall affix one of the foregoing warning statements to the packaging, labeling or directly to a specific Product. The warning statement shall be affixed to the Product, Products’ packaging or labeling and placed 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. Where the short-form warning statement is provided on the label, the entire warning must be in a type size no smaller than the largest type size used for other consumer information on the product label. In no case shall the short-form warning statement appear in a type size smaller than six-point type.

Internet. In addition to the product labeling, where Portico Designs offers Products to California customers via its own proprietary internet website or any third-party website over which Portico Designs has control, Portico Designs shall provide a clear and reasonable internet web page warning to customers located in

California. The warning statement shall appear either: (i) on the same web page on which a Product is displayed and/or described; (ii) on the same page as the price for the Product; or (iii) on one or more web pages displayed to a California purchaser prior to completion of the checkout process. Alternatively, the warning statement shall be provided using a clearly marked hyperlink using the word “WARNING” on the product display page, or by otherwise prominently displaying the warning to the purchaser prior to completing the purchase. If the product label warning is provided using the short-form warning statement, the warning provided on the website may use the same content. A warning is not prominently displayed if the purchaser must search for it in the general content of the website. Where Portico Designs does not have control over the content of third-party internet sellers, Portico Designs shall provide such sellers with written notice, in accordance with Title 27, California Code of Regulation, Section 25600.2, of their warning obligations. Third-party internet sellers who receive notice pursuant to Section 25600.2 and fail to provide a clear and reasonable Proposition 65 warning pursuant to this section, shall not be deemed in compliance with this Settlement Agreement and shall not receive any benefit or protection afforded hereunder.

Catalog. In addition to the product labeling, if Portico Designs sells Products via its own proprietary catalog or any third-party catalogue over which Portico Designs has control, to customers located in California, one of the foregoing warnings statements must also be provided in the catalog in a manner that clearly associates it with the *specific* item being purchased. The catalog warning statement shall be placed 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. If a short-form warning is being provided on the label, the warning provided in the catalog may use the same content. Where Portico Designs does not have control over the content of third-party catalog sellers, Portico Designs shall provide such sellers with written notice, in accordance with Title 27, California Code of Regulation, Section

25600.2, of their warning obligations. Third-party catalog sellers who receive notice pursuant to Section 25600.2 and fail to provide a clear and reasonable Proposition 65 warning pursuant to this section, shall not be deemed in compliance with this Settlement Agreement and shall not receive any benefit or protection afforded hereunder.

Languages. Where a label or tag used to provide a warning statement includes consumer information about a product in a language other than English, the warning must also be provided in that language in addition to English.

2.3.3 Safe Harbor Warnings. The parties acknowledge that the warnings required by this section are not the exclusive methods of providing Proposition 65 warnings and agree that Portico Designs may utilize “safe harbor” warning language and methods promulgated by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment and contained in 27 CCR §§ 25602-25603, applicable to lead and the Products, in effect on or after the Effective Date, without being deemed in breach of this Settlement Agreement.

3. MONETARY SETTLEMENT TERMS

3.1 Civil Penalty Payment

Pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(b)(2), and as consideration for the releases contained in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 below, Portico Designs agrees to pay \$800 in civil penalties no later than the Effective Date. The penalty payment will be allocated in accordance with California Health and Safety Code section 25249.12(c)(1) & (d), with 75% of the penalty amount remitted to the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (“OEHHA”) and the remaining 25% of the penalty amount paid to Johnson. Portico Designs shall make its payment in two checks, delivered to the address in section 3.3, as follows: (1) “OEHHA” in the amount of \$600; and (2) “Dennis Johnson” in the amount of \$200.

3.2 Attorneys’ Fees and Costs

The Parties acknowledge that Johnson and his counsel offered to resolve this dispute without reaching terms on the amount of fees and costs to be reimbursed to his

counsel, thereby leaving the issue to be resolved after the material terms of the agreement had been settled. Shortly after the other settlement terms had been reached, Portico Designs expressed a desire to resolve Johnson's fees and costs. The Parties reached an accord on the compensation due to Johnson's counsel under general contract principles and the private attorney general doctrine codified at Code of Civil Procedure section 1021.5 for all work performed in this matter. Under these legal principles, Portico Designs agrees to pay, no later than the Effective Date, \$7,700, in the form of a check made payable to "Voorhees & Bailey, LLP," for all fees and costs incurred investigating, bringing this matter to the attention of Portico Designs' management, and negotiating a settlement.

3.3 Payment Address and Tax Documentation

All checks under this Settlement Agreement shall be delivered to the following address and shall, thereafter, be delivered by Johnson to the respective payees:

Voorhees & Bailey, LLP
27 Pine Street; Suite 50
New Canaan, CT 06840

Johnson shall provide IRS W-9 forms for: (i) "Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment", (ii) Dennis Johnson, and (iii) Voorhees & Bailey, LLP. Portico Designs shall issue complete IRS 1099 forms to each payee for their respective payment amount, including an IRS 1099-MISC form to Johnson.

4. CLAIMS COVERED AND RELEASED

4.1 Johnson's Release of Proposition 65 Claims

Johnson acting on his own behalf, and not on behalf of the public, releases Portico Designs, its parents, subsidiaries, affiliated entities under common ownership, shareholders, marketplaces, directors, officers, agents employees, attorneys, successors and assignees, and each entity to whom Portico Designs directly or indirectly distributes or sells the Products, including, but not limited, to downstream distributors, wholesalers, customers, retailers, franchisees, cooperative members, and licensees, including, but not

limited to Barnes & Noble, and their respective subsidiaries, affiliates and parents, franchisees, cooperative members, importers, and licensees (collectively, the “Releasees”), from all claims for violations of Proposition 65 within 60 days after the Effective Date based on unwarned exposures to lead in the Products.

4.2 Johnson’s Individual Release of Claims

Johnson, in his individual capacity only and not in his representative capacity, provides a 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, penalties, fines, and demands of Johnson of any nature, character, or kind, whether known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected, including but not limited to all failure to warn claims, arising out of alleged or actual exposures to lead in the Products manufactured, imported, distributed, or sold by Portico Designs and/or Barnes & Noble prior to 60 days after the Effective Date. Nothing in this Section affects Johnson’s right to commence or prosecute an action under Proposition 65 against a Releasee that does not involve Portico Designs’ Products.

4.3 Portico Designs’ Release of Johnson

Portico Designs, on its own behalf, and on behalf of its past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, successors, and/or assignees, hereby waives any and all claims against Johnson and his attorneys and other representatives, for any and all actions taken or statements made by Johnson and his attorneys and other representatives, whether in the course of investigating claims, seeking to enforce Proposition 65 against it in this matter, or with respect to the Products.

4.4 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. Johnson, on behalf of himself only, on one hand, and Portico Designs, 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 Sections 4.1-4.3 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 WHICH 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.

Johnson and Portico Designs each acknowledge and understand the significance of this specific waiver of California Civil Code § 1542.

5. SEVERABILITY

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

6. 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. In the event that Proposition 65 is repealed or is otherwise rendered inapplicable by reason of law generally, or as to the Products, then Portico Designs may provide written notice to Johnson of any asserted change in the law and shall have no further injunctive obligations pursuant to this Settlement Agreement with respect to, and to the extent that, the Products are so affected.

7. 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 Portico Designs:

Merton A. Howard
Hanson Bridgett LLP
1000 4th St., Ste. 700
San Rafael, CA 94901

For Johnson:

Dennis Johnson
c/o Voorhees & Bailey, LLP
Proposition 65 Coordinator
27 Pine Street; Suite 50
New Canaan, CT 06840

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.

8. 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.

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

Johnson and his attorneys agree to comply with the reporting form requirements referenced in California Health and Safety Code section 25249.7(f).

10. MODIFICATION

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

11. ENTIRE AGREEMENT

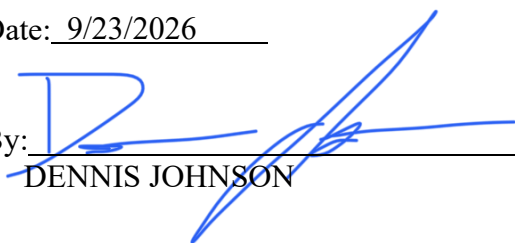
This Settlement Agreement contains the sole and entire agreement of the Parties and any and all prior negotiations and understandings related hereto shall be deemed to have been merged within it. No representations or terms of agreement other than those contained herein exist or have been made by any Party with respect to the other Party or the subject matter hereof. The Parties agree that Barnes & Noble is a third party beneficiary of this Agreement.

12. AUTHORIZATION

The undersigned are authorized to execute this Settlement Agreement on behalf of their respective Parties and have read, understand, and agreed to all of the terms and conditions of this Settlement Agreement.

AGREED TO:

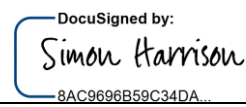
Date: 9/23/2026

By: 

DENNIS JOHNSON

AGREED TO:

Date: 25-Sep-26

By: 

PORTICO DESIGNS LIMITED