

**ROB BONTA**  
**Attorney General**

**State of California**  
**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**



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February 26, 2024

By electronic delivery and U.S. mail

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RE: Proposition 65 Notice No. 2023-03955

Dear Mr. Greenbaum:

We write to you pursuant to the Attorney General's authority under Health and Safety Code section 25249.7, subdivision (e)(1)(A), which is part of the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, commonly known as "Proposition 65." We have reviewed the above 60-day notice of violation and accompanying certificate of merit that Mothers Oversight Network for Action Response to Contaminant Harm ("MONARCH) LLC sent to Laura Ashley, Inc.; Kennedy International, Inc.; and Michael's Stores, Inc. on December 13, 2023. The notice alleges that the companies sell products that expose persons to Di-isodecyl Phthalate ("DIDP") without providing a clear and reasonable warning.

Based on our review of the notice, we have concluded that you have failed to provide sufficient information to indicate that there is a credible basis to conclude that there is merit to each element of the action on which plaintiff will have the burden of proof and that the information relied on does not prove that any affirmative defense has merit. The 60-day notice does not give MONARCH authority to file suit in the public interest, or to settle claims based on the alleged violations. We ask that you withdraw the notice immediately. Our position is discussed in more detail below.

Proposition 65 requires companies with ten or more employees to provide clear and reasonable warnings to persons prior to knowingly and intentionally exposing them to chemicals known to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity. (Health & Saf. Code, § 25249.6.) Persons acting in the public interest can bring a private action to enforce Proposition 65 at least sixty days after sending a 60-day notice to the alleged violators and public enforcers, unless the Attorney General or other public enforcer is diligently prosecuting an action against the violation. (*Id.*, § 25249.7, subd. (d).) Before sending a 60-day notice alleging a failure to warn, the private enforcer must consult with an expert who has reviewed facts, studies, or other data

regarding the alleged exposure to the listed chemical. Based on the consultation, the person sending the notice or his or her attorney must execute a certificate of merit stating his or her belief that, based on the consultation, “there is a reasonable and meritorious case for the private action.” (*Id.*, subd. (d)(1).) The enforcer must attach to the Attorney General’s copy of the certificate of merit factual information sufficient to establish the basis of the certificate of merit. The Attorney General must maintain this information in confidence. (*Id.*, subds. (d)(1), (i).) The certificate of merit must document both exposure to the chemical and that there “is merit to each element of the action on which the plaintiff will have the burden of proof.” (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 11, § 3101, subd. (a).) Further, the certifier must certify that “the information relied upon does not prove that any affirmative defense has merit.” (*Ibid.*) If the Attorney General believes there is no merit to the action after reviewing the certificate of merit and meeting and conferring with the private enforcer, the Attorney General must serve a letter on the noticing party and the alleged violator stating this position and make the letter available to the public. (Health & Saf. Code, § 25249.7, subd. (e)(1).)

The referenced 60-day notice alleges that the companies expose persons to DIDP in certain products without providing the required warning. We are not able to disclose the contents of the supporting information for the certificate of merit. However, based on our review, we have concluded that you have failed to provide sufficient information to indicate that there is a credible basis to conclude that there is merit to each element of the action on which plaintiff will have the burden of proof and that the information relied upon does not prove that any affirmative defense has merit. Thus, the 60-day notice does not give MONARCH authority to file suit in the public interest, or to settle claims based on the alleged violations, and we ask that you withdraw the notice immediately.

Sincerely,

*/S/ Susan S. Fiering*

SUSAN S. FIERING  
Deputy Attorney General

For ROB BONTA  
Attorney General

cc: CEO or President Laura Ashley Inc.  
7000 Regent Parkway  
For Mill, SC 29715

CEO or President Kennedy International Inc.  
1800 Water Works Road  
Old Bridge, NJ 08857

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CEO or President Michael's Stores Inc.  
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