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9
 10 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
 11 **NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

12 Phillip White, individually and on behalf of all
 13 others similarly situated,

14 Plaintiff,

15 vs.

16 The Kroger Co.; and Fruit Of The Earth, Inc.;

17 Defendant.

Case No.:

18 **CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT**

- 19 1. Violation of Unfair Competition Law
(Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 17200, *et seq.*)
- 20 2. Violation of False Advertising Law
(Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 17500, *et seq.*)
- 21 3. Violation of Consumers Legal
Remedies Act (Cal. Civ. Code §§
1750, *et seq.*)
- 22 4. Breach of Warranty
- 23 5. Unjust Enrichment

24 **JURY TRIAL DEMANDED**

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COMPLAINT

1
2 1. Plaintiff Phillip White (“**Plaintiff**”), individually and on behalf of all others similarly
3 situated, as more fully described herein (the “**Class**” and “**Class Members**”), brings this class action
4 complaint against Defendant The Kroger Company (“**Defendant**”), and alleges the following upon
5 information and belief, unless otherwise expressly stated as based upon personal knowledge:

6 2. **Synopsis.** To obtain an unfair competitive advantage in the billion-dollar sunscreen
7 market, Defendant is exposing consumers and the environment to harmful chemical active
8 ingredients in their sunscreens by falsely labeling them as “REEF FRIENDLY.” Defendant has
9 reaped millions of dollars through this fraudulent scheme based on a calculated business decision
10 to put profits over people and the environment. Specifically, Defendant deceptively labels certain
11 of its Kroger® brand sun care Products as “REEF FRIENDLY” deliberately leading reasonable
12 consumers, including Plaintiff, to believe that the Products only contain ingredients that are reef-
13 safe and otherwise cannot harm reefs, including the coral reefs and marine life that inhabits or
14 depends on them (hereinafter, “**Reef Friendly Representation**,” “**False Advertising Claim**”
15 and/or “**Challenged Representation**”). Fair and accurate exemplars of the Products’ front labels,
16 with the Challenged Representation circled in red, are below.

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1 a. (1) Kroger® *Baby* Sunscreen: Exemplar Front Labels (see also Exhibit 1-1 to 1-2
2 [Product Images])



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1 b. (2) Kroger® Kids Sunscreen: Exemplar Front Label (see also Exhibit 1-3 [Product
2 Images])



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1 c. (3) Kroger® Sheer Sunscreen: Exemplar Front Labels (see also Exhibit 1-4 to 1-5
2 [Product Images])
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1 e. (4) Kroger® Sport Sunscreen: Exemplar Front Labels (see also Exhibit 1-6 to 1-13
2 [Product Images])



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1 g. (5) Kroger® Sunscreen: Exemplar Front Labels (see also Exhibit 1-14 to 1-16
2 [Product Images])
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1 h. (6) Kroger® Tanning Sunscreen: Exemplar Front Label (see also Exhibit 1-17
2 [Product Images])
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1 3. **The Deception of the Challenged Representation.** The Challenged Representation
2 has misled reasonable consumers, including Plaintiff, into believing that the Products only contain
3 ingredients that are reef-safe or otherwise cannot harm reefs, including the coral reefs and the
4 marine life that inhabits or depends on them. However, contrary to this labeling, the Products
5 actually contain Harmful Ingredients (including avobenzone, homosalate, octisalate, and/or
6 octocrylene), which are chemical ingredients that are not safe for reefs because they can harm and/or
7 kill reefs, including the coral reefs and the marine life that inhabits or depends on them. Through
8 falsely, misleadingly, and deceptively labeling the Products, Defendant sought to take advantage of
9 consumers' desire for sunscreens that are friendly to or safe for reefs (coral reefs and marine life
10 and related ecosystems that inhabit or depend on coral reefs), while reaping the financial benefits
11 of using less desirable, harmful, and/or less costly chemicals in the Products. Defendant has done
12 so at the expense of unwitting consumers, as well as Defendant's lawfully acting competitors, over
13 whom Defendant maintains an unfair competitive advantage.

14 4. **The Products.** The products at issue are the Kroger® brand sun care products
15 (including sunscreens, sun-blocks, and tanning lotions) manufactured and/or marketed by
16 Defendant that contain the Challenged Representation on the labels and/or packaging, in all sizes,
17 forms of topical application (including, for example, stick, paste, oil, lotion, cream, liquid, spray, or
18 mist), SPF's, scents and/or flavors, variations, and packs, sets or bundles, which include, but are not
19 necessarily limited to:

20 a. Kroger® *Baby* Sunscreen, including

21 (1) Lotion in SPF 50, 8-oz, and

22 (2) Spray in SPF 50, 6.3-oz

23 (see, supra, paragraph 2, a.; see also **Exhibit 1-1 to 1-2** [Product Images]);

24 b. Kroger® *Kids* Sunscreen, including

25 (3) Spray in SPF 50, 5.5-oz, and

26 (see, supra, paragraph 2, b.; see also **Exhibit 1-3** [Product Images]);

27 c. Kroger® *Sheer* Sunscreen, including

28 (4) Lotion in SPF 70, 3-oz, and

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- 1 (5) Lotion in SPF 100, 3-oz
2 (*see, supra*, paragraph 2, c.; *see also* **Exhibit 1-4 to 1-5** [Product Images]);
3 d. Kroger® *Sport* Sunscreen, including
4 (6) Lotion in SPF 30, 8-oz,
5 (7) Lotion in SPF 50, 1.5- and 8-oz,
6 (8) Spray in SPF 15, 5.5-oz,
7 (9) Spray in SPF 30, 5.5-, and 9.1-oz, and
8 (10) Spray in SPF 50, 5.5-, and 9.1-oz
9 (*see, supra*, paragraph 2, d.; *see also* **Exhibit 1-6 to 1-13** [Product Images]);
10 e. Kroger® *Sunscreen*, including
11 (11) Lotion in SPF 30, 8-oz,
12 (12) Lotion in SPF 50, 8-oz, and
13 (13) Spray in SPF 50, 5.5-oz
14 (*see, supra*, paragraph 2, e.; *see also* **Exhibit 1-14 to 1-16**[Product Images]); and
15 f. Kroger® *Tanning* Sunscreen, including
16 (14) Spray in SPF 15, 5.5-oz
17 (*see, supra*, paragraph 2, f.; *see also* **Exhibit 1-17** [Product Images]); and

18 The aforementioned Products are collectively referred to herein and throughout this complaint as
19 the “**Products.**” *See* **Exhibit 1** [Product Images].

20 5. **Primary Dual Objectives.** Plaintiff brings this action individually and on behalf of
21 those similarly situated to represent a National Class and a California Subclass of consumers who
22 purchased the Products (defined *infra*) for dual primary objectives. Plaintiff seeks, on Plaintiff’s
23 individual behalf and on behalf of the Class, a monetary recovery of the premium consumers paid
24 for the Challenged Representation and Defendant’s ill-gotten gains, as consistent with permissible
25 law (including, for example, damages, restitution, disgorgement, and any applicable
26 penalties/punitive damages solely as to those causes of action so permitted). Plaintiff further seeks
27 injunctive relief to stop Defendant’s unlawful labeling and advertising of the Products and to dispel
28

1 the public's misconception caused by the Challenged Representation, by enjoining Defendant's
2 unlawful advertising practices for the benefit of consumers, including Plaintiff and the Class.

3 JURISDICTION

4 6. This Court has original jurisdiction over this action pursuant to the Class Action
5 Fairness Act of 2005, 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d), because the proposed Class consists of 100 or more
6 members; the amount in controversy exceeds \$5,000,000, exclusive of costs and interest; and
7 minimal diversity exists. This Court also has supplemental jurisdiction over the state law claims
8 pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367.

9 VENUE

10 7. Venue is proper in this District under 28 U.S.C. § 1391 because a substantial part of
11 the events and omissions giving rise to Plaintiff's claims occurred in this District. In addition,
12 Plaintiff purchased the unlawful Products in this District, and Defendants have marketed,
13 advertised, and sold the Products within this District.

14 PARTIES

15 **A. Plaintiff**

16 8. **Plaintiff Phillip White.** The following is alleged based upon personal knowledge: (1)
17 Plaintiff is a resident of San Mateo County, California. (2) Plaintiff purchased the Kroger® *Sport*
18 Sunscreen, Spray, SPF 50, 5.5-oz (the "**Purchased Product**"), for approximately \$5.00 at a retail
19 store in or around the County of San Mateo, State of California, in approximately summer of 2021
20 (*see Exhibit 1-12* [Exemplar Product Image]). (3) In making the purchase, the Challenged
21 Representation on the Product's label led Plaintiff to believe that the Product's ingredients were all
22 reef-safe and otherwise could not harm reefs, including the coral reefs and marine life that inhabits
23 and depends on them. (4) At the time of purchase, Plaintiff did not know that the aforementioned
24 Challenged Representation was false—i.e., that the Product contains ingredients that were not reef-
25 safe and otherwise could harm reefs, including the coral reefs and marine life that inhabits and
26 depends on them. (5) Plaintiff would not have purchased the Product had Plaintiff known that the
27 Challenged Representation was false—i.e., that the Product contained ingredients that can harm
28 reefs, including the coral reefs and marine life that inhabit and depend on them. (6) Plaintiff

1 continues to see the Products available for purchase and desires to purchase them again if the
2 Challenged Representation was in fact true. (7) Plaintiff is not personally familiar with ingredients
3 in the Products and does not possess any specialized knowledge, skill, experience, or education in
4 sun care products, similar to and including the Products, and their ingredients or formulations; the
5 Harmful Ingredients and similar substances; marine life pollutants and substances hazardous to
6 reefs, including coral reefs and the marine life that inhabits and depends on them; and, therefore,
7 Plaintiff has no way of determining whether the Challenged Representation on the Products is true.
8 (8) Plaintiff is, and continues to be, unable to rely on the truth of the Challenged Representation on
9 the Products' labels.

10 9. **Plaintiff's Future Harm.** Plaintiff(s) would continue to purchase the Products in the
11 future if the Products, as Defendant(s) continue(s) to advertise and warrant them, lived up to and
12 conformed with the Challenged Representation. Further, Plaintiff(s) is an (are) average consumer(s)
13 who is(are) not sophisticated in, for example, sun care product formulations, similar to and
14 including the Products, and chemicals hazardous to reefs, similar to and including the Harmful
15 Ingredients. Since Plaintiff(s) would like to purchase the Products again to obtain the benefits of
16 the Challenged Representations that Defendant(s) continue(s) to use—despite the fact that the
17 Products were once marred by false advertising or warranties—Plaintiff(s) would likely and
18 reasonably, but incorrectly, assume the Products are true to and conform with the Challenged
19 Representations on their labels, packaging, and Defendant's advertisements, including Defendant's
20 website(s) and social media platforms. Accordingly, Plaintiff(s) is at risk of reasonably, but
21 incorrectly, assuming that Defendant(s) has(ve) fixed the Products such that Plaintiff(s) may buy
22 them again, believing they are no longer falsely advertised and warranted and instead believing that
23 they comply with the Challenged Representations. In this regard, Plaintiff(s) is(are) currently and
24 in the future deprived of the ability to rely on the Challenged Representations to purchase the
25 Products.

26 **B. Defendant**

27 10. **Defendant The Kroger Co. (“Defendant” and/or “Kroger”)** is a corporation
28 incorporated, headquartered, and with its principal place of business in the State of Ohio. Defendant

1 was doing business in the State of California at all relevant times. Directly and through its agents,
 2 Defendant has substantial contacts with and receives substantial benefits and income from and
 3 through the State of California. Defendant is one of the owners, manufacturers, and/or distributors
 4 of the Products, and is one of the companies that created and/or authorized the false, misleading,
 5 and deceptive labeling of the Products. Defendant and its agents promoted, marketed, and sold the
 6 Products at issue in this jurisdiction and in this judicial district. The unfair, unlawful, deceptive,
 7 and misleading Challenged Representations on the Products were prepared, authorized, ratified,
 8 and/or approved by Defendant and its agents, and were disseminated throughout California and the
 9 nation by Defendant and its agents to deceive and mislead consumers in the State of California and
 10 the United States into purchasing the Products.

11 11. **Defendant Fruit Of The Earth, Inc. (“Defendant” and/or “FOTE”)** is a
 12 corporation incorporated in the State of Delaware with its headquarters and principal place of
 13 business in the State of Texas. Defendant was doing business in the State of California at all relevant
 14 times. Directly and through its agents, Defendant has substantial contacts with and receives
 15 substantial benefits and income from and through the State of California. Defendant is one of the
 16 owners, manufacturers, and/or distributors of the Products, and is one of the companies that created
 17 and/or authorized the false, misleading, and deceptive labeling of the Products. Defendant and its
 18 agents promoted, marketed, and sold the Products at issue in this jurisdiction and in this judicial
 19 district. The unfair, unlawful, deceptive, and misleading Challenged Representations on the
 20 Products were prepared, authorized, ratified, and/or approved by Defendant and its agents, and were
 21 disseminated throughout California and the nation by Defendant and its agents to deceive and
 22 mislead consumers in the State of California and the United States into purchasing the Products.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

A. Background

25 12. **Background.** Reefs are some of the most diverse ecosystems in the world. Reefs
 26 protect coastlines from storms and erosion, provide jobs for local communities, and offer
 27
 28

1 opportunities for recreation.¹ Over half a billion people depend on reefs for food, income, and
 2 protection.² Additionally, reef ecosystems are culturally important to people around the world.³
 3 Indeed, the world’s largest reef, the Australian Great Barrier Reef, is considered to be one of the
 4 great seven natural wonders of the world due to its scale, beauty, and biodiversity.⁴ Despite their
 5 ecological and cultural importance, reefs are disappearing at alarming rates.⁵ In fact, some scientists
 6 predict that if current trends continue, nearly all reefs will disappear over the next twenty to fifty
 7 years.⁶ In recent years, consumers have become increasingly concerned about protecting reefs
 8 through individual action, including purchasing reef friendly personal care products, in particular
 9 sun care and sun protection products, which are free from chemicals that can harm reefs, including
 10 the coral reefs and marine life that inhabits and depends on them. Thus, reef-safe personal care
 11 products, in particular sun care products such as sunscreens and sun blocks, are rapidly increasing
 12 in popularity due to their perceived positive ecological impact.⁷

13 13. **Harmful Chemicals.** Avobenzone, homoslate, octisalate, and octocrylene
 14 (collectively, “**Harmful Ingredients**”) are chemicals that can harm reefs, including coral reefs and
 15 the marine life that inhabits and depends on them.

16 14. **The HEL—Octocrylene.** The Haerecticus Environmental Laboratory (“**HEL**”) is a
 17 nonprofit organization that specializes in research and advocacy in a number of areas including
 18 sunscreens and how their ingredients impact natural environmental habitats. Regarding certain
 19

20 _____
 21 ¹ “Coral Reef Ecosystems,” National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration,
<https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections/marine-life/coral-reef-ecosystems> (last
 22 accessed Oct. 12, 2021).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

23 ⁴ *Id.*; “Great Barrier Reef,” WWF [World Wildlife Fund], <https://www.wwf.org.au/what-we-do/oceans/great-barrier-reef#gs.b5pmtu> (last accessed Oct. 12, 2021).

24 ⁵ *Id.*

25 ⁶ “Nearly All Coral Reefs Will Disappear Over the Next 20 Years, Scientists Say,” Forbes (2020),
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/trevornace/2020/02/24/70-90-percent-of-coral-reefs-will-disappear-over-the-next-20-years-scientists-say/?sh=70e461da7d87> (last accessed Oct. 12, 2021).

26 ⁷ “Reef Safe Sunscreen Guide,” Save the Reef, <https://savethereef.org/about-reef-save-sunscreen.html> (last accessed Sept. 29, 2021); “9 Reasons Why You Should Switch to a Reef Safe Sunscreen,” Elle.com, <https://www.elle.com/beauty/makeup-skin-care/g32685164/best-reef-safe-sunscreen/> (last accessed Oct. 12, 2021); “How to Know if Your Sunscreen is Killing Coral Reefs – and the Brands to Try Instead,” Travel and Leisure, <https://www.travelandleisure.com/style/beauty/reef-safe-sunscreen> (last accessed Oct. 12, 2021).

1 harmful ingredients used in sunscreens, the HEL reports that octocrylene is a chemical that causes
2 harm and/or can kill coral reefs and pose a substantial threat to ecosystem health.⁸

3 15. **The NOS—Octocrylene.** The National Ocean Service (“NOS”) also advocates
4 against the use of certain chemicals, including octocrylene, in the use of sunscreen because of the
5 severe negative impact that it has on coral reefs.⁹ The NOS classifies octocrylene as a threat to coral
6 reefs, as well as marine ecosystems.¹⁰

7 16. **The Hawaii Center for Biological Diversity (the “Center”)—Octocrylene &**
8 **Avobenzone.** The Center is petitioning the FDA for a national ban on chemicals, like octocrylene
9 and avobenzone, in sunscreens that harm and kill the coral reefs.¹¹ The center is also advocating for
10 a statewide ban of octocrylene and avobenzone in sunscreens, noting the toxic impacts these
11 chemicals have on the coral reefs and marine life.¹²

12 17. **FDA Petition—Octocrylene.** In fact, a larger group of researchers have also
13 petitioned the FDA to remove from sale all sunscreens that contain octocrylene.¹³ Because products
14 made with octocrylene may contain benzophenone, a known carcinogen, and is considered to be an
15 endocrine, metabolic, and reproductive disruptor.¹⁴

16 18. **Hawaii Legislature—Octocrylene & Avobenzone.** In 2018, state lawmakers
17 banned oxybenzone and octinoxate from being included as ingredients in sunscreens sold in Hawaii
18 because of their deleterious impact on coral reefs and dependent marine life. In 2021, state
19 lawmakers amended the bill to also ban the sale of sunscreens that contain avobenzone and
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22 _____
23 ⁸ “Protect Land + Sea Certification,” Haereticus Environmental Laboratory, <http://haereticus-lab.org/protect-land-sea-certification-3/> (last accessed Oct. 12, 2021).

24 ⁹ “Skincare Chemicals and Coral Reefs,” National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/news/sunscreen-coral.html> (last accessed Oct. 12, 2021).

25 ¹⁰ *Id.*

26 ¹¹ “Hawai’i Senate Bill Bans Harmful Sunscreen Chemicals” Center for Biological Diversity (March 9, 2021), <https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/hawaii-senate-bill-bans-harmful-sunscreen-chemicals-2021-03-09/> (last accessed Oct. 12, 2021).

27 ¹² *Id.*

28 ¹³ Popular sunscreens under scrutiny as scientists cite another potential carcinogen, Los Angeles Times (Aug. 10, 2021), <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2021-08-10/sunscreen-fda-carcinogen-benzophenone-octocrylene-concerns> (last accessed Oct. 12, 2021).

¹⁴ *Id.*

1 octocrylene starting in 2023.¹⁵ Octocrylene was banned because it can disrupt human hormones and
 2 has a toxic impact on aquatic ecosystems, including coral reefs.¹⁶ Avobenzone was banned because
 3 it is “an endocrine disruptor and can reduce coral resilience against the high ocean temperatures that
 4 are killing corals worldwide.”¹⁷

5 **19. International Bans—Octocrylene & Homosalate.** In June 2019, the US Virgin
 6 Islands banned sunscreens containing octocrylene, oxybenzone, and octinoxate, with the ban
 7 effective beginning March 2020.¹⁸ In addition, Palau, Bonaire, and the nature reserve areas in
 8 Mexico have approved legislation for similar bans, and a similar ban is being discussed in Brazil
 9 and the EU.¹⁹ Furthermore, the European Commission has recently recommended that homosalate
 10 was not safe to use at certain concentrations and should have a maximum concentration of 1.4
 11 percent.²⁰ Scientists in the United States have likewise raised concerns about the toxic nature of
 12 these ingredients, as well as homosalate, and believe they also have a harmful impact on reefs.²¹

13 ¹⁵ “Hawaii Senate Bill 132,” Hawaii State Legislature,
 14 https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/measure_indiv.aspx?billtype=SB&billnumber=132&year=2021
 (last accessed on Oct. 12, 2021).

15 ¹⁶ “Bill would prohibit sale of sunscreen products containing avobenzone and octocrylene,” West
 16 Hawaii Today (March 10, 2021), <https://www.westhawaii.com/2021/03/10/hawaii-news/bill-would-prohibit-sale-of-sunscreen-products-containing-avobenzone-and-octocrylene/> (last accessed
 17 Oct. 12, 2021).

17 ¹⁷ *Id.*

18 ¹⁸ Narla, et. al., “Sunscreen: FDA regulation, and environmental and health impact,” Royal Society
 of Chemistry (Nov. 22, 2019), <https://pubs.rsc.org/en/content/articlehtml/2019/pp/c9pp00366e> (last
 19 accessed on Oct. 12, 2021).

19 ¹⁹ *Id.*

20 ²⁰ “The Trouble with Ingredients In Sunscreen,” Environmental Working Group,
<https://www.ewg.org/sunscreen/report/the-trouble-with-sunscreen-chemicals/> (last accessed on
 21 Oct. 12, 2021).

21 ²¹ Yang, Changwon, et al. “Homosalate Aggravates the Invasion of Human Trophoblast Cells as
 Well as Regulates Intracellular Signaling Pathways Including PI3K/AKT and MAPK Pathways,”
 22 243 Environmental Pollution 1263-73 (Dec. 2018), <https://europepmc.org/article/med/30267922>
 (last accessed Oct. 12, 2021); Park, Chang-Beom, et al. “Single- and Mixture Toxicity of Three
 23 Organic UV-Filters, Ethylhexyl Methoxycinnamate, Octocrylene, and Avobenzone on Daphnia
 Magna.” 137 Ecotoxicology and Environmental Safety 57-63 (Mar. 2017),
 24 [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311425878_Single-
 and_mixture_toxicity_of_three_organic_UV-](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311425878_Single-and_mixture_toxicity_of_three_organic_UV-filters_ethylhexyl_methoxycinnamate_octocrylene_and_avobenzone_on_Daphnia_magna)

25 [filters_ethylhexyl_methoxycinnamate_octocrylene_and_avobenzone_on_Daphnia_magna](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299423358_Direct_and_indirect_effects_of_sunscreen_exposure_for_reef_biota) (last
 26 accessed Oct. 12, 2021); McCoshum, Shaun M., et al. “Direct and Indirect Effects of Sunscreen
 Exposure for Reef Biota,” 776 Hydrobiologia 139-46 (Issue no. 1, Aug. 2016),
 27 [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299423358_Direct_and_indirect_effects_of_sunscreen_](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299423358_Direct_and_indirect_effects_of_sunscreen_exposure_for_reef_biota)
 exposure_for_reef_biota (last accessed Oct. 12, 2021); Slijkerman, D. M. E., and M. Keur,
 28 “Sunscreen Ecoproducts: Product Claims, Potential Effects and Environmental Risks of Applied
 UV Filters,” Wageningen Marine Research (2018),

1 20. **The EWG—Octisalate.** The EWG warns consumers that the harmful effect of
 2 Octisalate, to the human body and aquatic ecosystems, is mostly uncertain because there lacks
 3 sufficient data to determine whether this chemical is safe to use in sun protectants and sunscreens.²²
 4 Octisalate is frequently detected in coral reefs and, unfortunately, common wastewater treatments
 5 cannot remove this chemical, leading octisalate to accumulate and negatively affect the coral reef
 6 ecosystems and marine organisms.²³ The toxicity of this chemical contributes to the bleaching of
 7 coral reefs, which ultimately leads to coral extinction.²⁴

8 21. **Consumers’ Desire for Reef-Safe Products.** Consequently, because of the
 9 ecological concerns about sun care products (such as sunscreens and sun blocks), consumers have
 10 increasingly sought out products that are reef-safe and otherwise cannot harm reefs, including coral
 11 reefs and the marine life that inhabits and depends on them. As a result, sales have surged in recent
 12 years for consumer personal care and sun care products advertised with “reef safe,” “reef friendly,”
 13 “reef conscious,” and similar claims.

14 **B. The Products’ Misleading and Deceptive Labeling**

15 22. **Products.** As described *supra*, Defendant manufactures, markets, advertises, labels,
 16 packages, and sells the Products.

17 23. **Challenged Representations on Products’ Labels.** Also as described *supra*,
 18 Defendant falsely and misleadingly labels the Products with the Challenged Representation. The
 19 Challenged Representation is conspicuous. It is prominently placed on each Product’s primary
 20 display panel of the front label or packaging. The front primary display panel contains scant imagery
 21 and information about the Products, largely limited to the brand name, identity of the product (e.g.,
 22 sunscreen), and one or a few claims about the Products’ attributes (e.g., size). The Challenged

23 _____
 24 <https://research.wur.nl/en/publications/sunscreen-ecoproducts-product-claims-potential-effects-and-enviro> (last accessed Oct. 12, 2021).

25 ²² “The Trouble with Ingredients In Sunscreen,” Environmental Working Group,
 26 <https://www.ewg.org/sunscreen/report/the-trouble-with-sunscreen-chemicals/> (last accessed Oct.
 12, 2021).

27 ²³ Ouchene, Lydia, et al. “Hawaii and Other Jurisdictions Ban Oxybenzone or Octinoxate
 Sunscreens Based on the Confirmed Adverse Environmental Effects of Sunscreen Ingredients on
 Aquatic Environments,: *Journal of Cutaneous Medicine and Surgery*, Nov. 2019, p. 648, doi:
 10.1177/1200475419871592 (last accessed Oct. 12, 2021).

28 ²⁴ *Id.*

1 Representation is stated in clear, legible, and highly visible font, including a relatively large typeface
 2 that starkly contrasts with the background color and imagery. The net-effect or net-impression on
 3 consumers who view the Products is that their attention is drawn to the Challenged Representation.
 4 *See Exhibit 1* [Product Images].

5 24. **Consumers' Reasonably Rely on the Challenged Representation.** Based on the
 6 Challenged Representation, reasonable consumers believe that the Products are safe for reefs. Put
 7 differently, reasonable consumers believe the Products do not contain any ingredients that can harm
 8 reefs, including coral reefs and the marine life that inhabits and relies on them, as a result of the
 9 Challenged Representations.

10 25. **Harmful Chemicals Contained in the Products.** In spite of the Products labeling,
 11 they contain Harmful Ingredients, including avobenzone, homosalate, octisalate and octorylene,
 12 which are chemicals that harm reefs, including coral reefs and the marine life that inhabits them. As
 13 summarized below, the Products contain the following Harmful Ingredients:

14 a. **Kroger® Baby Sunscreen (Lotion, SPF 50, All Sizes)**

15 Octisalate 5%
 16 Zinc Oxide 14.5%

17 *See Exhibit 1-1*

18 b. **Kroger® Baby Sunscreen (Spray, SPF 50, All Sizes)**

19 Avobenzone 3%
 20 Homosalate 13%
 21 Octisalate 5%
 22 Octorylene 2%

23 *See Exhibit 1-2*

24 c. **Kroger® Kids Sunscreen, Sport Sunscreen, and Sunscreen (Spray, SPF 30 and 50, All Sizes)**

25 Avobenzone 3%
 26 Homosalate 15%
 27 Octisalate 5%
 28 Octorylene 8%

See Exhibit 1-3, Exhibit 1-10 to Exhibit 1-13, and Exhibit 1-16

d. **Kroger® Sheer Sunscreen (Lotion, SPF 70 and 100, All Sizes)**

Avobenzone 3%
 Homosalate 18%
 Octisalate 5%
 Octorylene 10%

See Exhibit 1-4 to Exhibit 1-5

e. **Kroger® Sport Sunscreen and Sunscreen (Lotion, SPF 30 and 50, All Sizes)**

Avobenzone 3%

Homosalate 10%
 Octisalate 4.5%
 Octocrylene 8%

See **Exhibit 1-6** to **Exhibit 1-8**, and **Exhibit 1-14** to **Exhibit 1-15**

f. **Kroger® Sport Sunscreen and Tanning Sunscreen (Spray, SPF 15, All Sizes)**

Avobenzone 2%
 Homosalate 10%
 Octisalate 5%

See **Exhibit 1-9**, and **Exhibit 1-17**

26. **Avobenzone.** Avobenzone is typically used in the place of oxybenzone, another harmful chemical ingredient. When avobenzone is exposed to ultraviolet light the compound degrades and causes damage to coral reefs and aquatic life.²⁵

27. **Octocrylene.** Octocrylene produces benzophenone, which is a mutagen, carcinogen, and endocrine disruptor.²⁶ It is associated with a wide range of toxicities, including genotoxicity, carcinogenicity, and endocrine disruption. Octocrylene has been shown to accumulate in various types of aquatic life and cause DNA damage, developmental abnormalities, and adverse reproductive effects.²⁷ Bioaccumulation of this chemical leads to endocrine disruption, alteration of gene transcription, and developmental toxicity in fish, dolphins, sea urchins, and other marine life.²⁸ In addition, octocrylene adversely impacts coral reefs, even at low concentrations, by accumulating in coral tissue and triggering mitochondrial dysfunction.²⁹

²⁵ Ruszkiewicz, Joanna, et al. “Neurotoxic effect of active ingredients in sunscreen products, a contemporary review,” *PMC*, doi: 10.1016/j.toxrep.2017.05, May 2017, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5615097/#bib0635> (last accessed Oct. 12, 2021).

²⁶“Octocrylene” *Environmental Working Group*. [https://www.ewg.org/skindeep/ingredients/704206-OCTOCRYLENE_\(last accessed on Oct. 12, 2021\)](https://www.ewg.org/skindeep/ingredients/704206-OCTOCRYLENE_(last%20accessed%20on%20Oct.%2012,%202021)).

²⁷ Gago-Ferrero, Pablo, et al. “First Determination of UV Filters in Marine Mammals. Octocrylene Levels in Franciscana Dolphins,” *Environmental Science & Technology*, vol. 47, no. 11, American Chemical Society, June 2013, pp. 5619–25, doi:10.1021/es400675y (last accessed Oct. 12, 2021); Zhang, Qiuya Y., et al. “Assessment of Multiple Hormone Activities of a UV-Filter (Octocrylene) in Zebrafish (Danio Rerio),” *Chemosphere*, vol. 159, Sept. 2016, pp. 433–41, *ScienceDirect*, doi:10.1016/j.chemosphere.2016.06.037 (last accessed Oct. 12, 2021).

²⁸ Blüthgen, Nancy, et al. “Accumulation and Effects of the UV-Filter Octocrylene in Adult and Embryonic Zebrafish (Danio Rerio),” *The Science of the Total Environment*, vol. 476–477, Apr. 2014, pp. 207–17, *PubMed*, doi:10.1016/j.scitotenv.2014.01.015 (last accessed Oct. 1, 2021).

²⁹ Stien, Didier, et al. “Metabolomics Reveal That Octocrylene Accumulates in *Pocillopora Damicornis* Tissues as Fatty Acid Conjugates and Triggers Coral Cell Mitochondrial Dysfunction,” *Analytical Chemistry*, vol. 91, no. 1, Jan. 2019, pp. 990–95, *DOI.org (Crossref)*, doi:10.1021/acs.analchem.8b04187 (last accessed Oct. 12, 2021).

1 28. **Homosalate.** Homosalate also has harmful effects similar to octocrylene. Homosalate
2 impacts the bodies hormone system, particularly the estrogen system. This hormone disruption, as
3 well as pesticide disruption, are also cause harm to the coral reefs and aquatic organisms.³⁰

4 29. **Octisalate.** Octisalate also has similar harmful effects to the environment and coral
5 reefs. Octisalate is frequently detected in coral reefs and, unfortunately, common wastewater
6 treatments cannot remove this chemical, leading octisalate to accumulate and negatively affect the
7 coral reef ecosystems and marine organisms.³¹ The toxicity of this chemical contributes to the
8 bleaching of coral reefs, which ultimately leads to coral extinction.³² Octyl salicylate is a synonym
9 for octisalate.³³

10 30. **True Reef Safe Sunscreens.** True reef-safe sun care products do not contain any
11 ingredients that can harm reefs, including the coral reefs and the marine life that inhabits and
12 depends on them. Many environmental organizations have favored mineral active ingredients that
13 provide sun protection, such as zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, because they have not been
14 determined unsafe for people, the environment, or aquatic life, like reefs. However, manufacturers,
15 such as Defendant, “greenwash” their products by labeling them with environmentally and eco-
16 friendly claims, such as the Challenged Representations, to charge consumers with a premium for
17 reef-safe products, gain an unfair advantage over their competitors, and defraud consumers into
18 buying the Products even though they contain Harmful Ingredients that can harm reefs, including
19 coral reefs and the marine life that inhabits and depends on them.

20 **C. Plaintiff and Reasonable Consumers Were Misled by the Products**

21 31. **Deception.** Defendant’s labeling and advertising of the Products with the Challenged
22

23 ³⁰ “EWG’s Sunscreen Guide,” EWG, <https://www.ewg.org/sunscreen/report/executive-summary/>
24 (last accessed Sept. 29, 2021); “Homosalate,” Campaign for Safe Cosmetics,
25 <https://www.safecosmetics.org/get-the-facts/chemicals-of-concern/homosalate/> (last accessed Oct.
26 12, 2021).

27 ³¹ Ouchene, Lydia, et al. “Hawaii and Other Jurisdictions Ban Oybenzone or Octinoxate
28 Sunscreens Based on the Confirmed Adverse Environmental Effects of Sunscreen Ingredients on
Aquatic Environments,: *Journal of Cutaneous Medicine and Surgery*, Nov. 2019, p. 648, doi:
10.1177/1200475419871592 (last accessed Oct. 12, 2021).

³² *Id.*

³³ “Octisalate” *MedChemExpress*, <https://www.medchemexpress.com/Octisalate.html> (last
accessed Oct. 12, 2021).

1 Representation, when they are not reef-safe because they contain the Harmful Ingredients, which
2 can harm reefs, including coral reefs and/or the marine life that inhabits and depends on them,
3 misleads and deceives reasonable consumers, including Plaintiff, into purchasing the Products to
4 their financial detriment.

5 32. **Misrepresentation/Omission.** As set forth herein, the Challenged Representation
6 misrepresents that the Products do not contain ingredients that are unsafe for reefs and that the
7 Products' ingredients otherwise could not harm reefs, including coral reefs and the marine-life that
8 inhabits and depends them, because the Products actually contain Harmful Ingredients that are
9 unsafe for, and can otherwise harm, reefs, including coral reefs and/or the marine life that inhabits
10 and depends on them.

11 33. **Material.** The Challenged Representation was and is material to reasonable
12 consumers, including Plaintiff, in making the decision to purchase the Products, as set forth herein.

13 34. **Reliance.** Reasonable consumers, including Plaintiff, relied on the Challenged
14 Representation in deciding to purchase the Products, as set forth herein.

15 35. **Consumers Lack Knowledge of Falsity.** Consumers, including Plaintiff, who
16 purchased the Products, did not know, and had no reason to know, at the time of purchase that the
17 Products' Challenged Representation was false, misleading, deceptive, and unlawful as set forth
18 herein.

19 36. **Defendant' Knowledge.** Defendant knew, or should have known, that the Challenged
20 Representation was false, misleading, deceptive, and unlawful, at the time that Defendant
21 manufactured, marketed, advertised, labeled, and sold the Products using the Challenged
22 Representations, and Defendants intentionally and deliberately used the Challenged
23 Representations to cause Plaintiff and similarly situated consumers to buy them believing that the
24 Products are safe for, and otherwise could not harm, reefs (including coral reefs and the marine life
25 that inhabits and depends on them). The conspicuousness of the Challenged Representation on the
26 Products' labels and repeated use of the Challenged Representation in advertisements demonstrate
27 Defendant's awareness of the materiality of this representations and understanding that consumers
28 prefer and are motivated to buy products that conform to the Challenged Representation. Generally,

1 manufacturers and marketers repeat marketing messages to emphasize and characterize a brand or
2 product line. Similarly, they reserve the front primary display panel of labels on consumer products
3 of similar dimensions for the most important and persuasive information that they believe will
4 motivate consumers to buy the products. Defendant, as the manufacturer, formulated the Products
5 with the Harmful Ingredients and otherwise approved their inclusion in the Products. Defendant, as
6 the manufacturer, had exclusive control over the Challenged Representation's inclusion on the
7 Products' labels and in their advertisements—i.e., Defendant readily and easily could have removed
8 the Challenged Representation or refrained from using it on the labels and advertisements of the
9 Products. Defendant is and was, at all times, statutorily required to ensure it has adequate
10 substantiation for the Challenged Representation prior to labeling the Products, advertising the
11 Products, and selling the Products anywhere in the United States. Here, adequate substantiation and
12 compliance with regulatory law require reliable scientific evidence that supports such far-reaching
13 environment-friendly and/or eco-friendly claims as the Challenged Representation. Thus,
14 Defendant knew, or should have known, at all relevant times, that the Challenged Representations
15 are false and/or deceptive and reasonable consumers, such as Plaintiff, are being misled into buying
16 the Products based on the belief that the Challenged Representations.

17 37. **Detriment.** Plaintiff and similarly situated consumers would not have purchased the
18 Products, or would not have purchased the Products for as great a price, if they had known that the
19 Challenged Representations were false and, therefore, the Products did not have the attribute
20 claimed, promised, warranted, advertised, and represented. Accordingly, based on Defendant's
21 material misrepresentations and omissions, reasonable consumers, including Plaintiff, purchased
22 the Products to their detriment.

23 **D. The Products are Substantially Similar**

24 38. As described herein, Plaintiff purchased the Purchased Product. The additional
25 Products identified above in paragraph 4 *supra* (collectively, the "**Unpurchased Products**") are
26 substantially similar to the Purchased Product.

- 27 a. **Defendant.** All Products are manufactured, sold, marketed, advertised, labeled,
28 and packaged by Defendant.

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- b. **Brand.** All Products are sold under the same brand name: Kroger.
- c. **Marketing Demographics.** All Products are marketed directly to consumers for personal use.
- d. **Purpose.** All Products are sun care products primarily designed to provide protection from the sun.
- e. **Application.** All Products are applied in the same manner—topically; directly onto the skin, lips, and/or body surfaces.
- f. **Misrepresentations.** All Products contain the same the same Challenged Representation conspicuously and prominently placed on the primary display panel of the front label.
- g. **Packaging.** All Products are packaged in similar packaging.
- h. **Key Ingredients.** All Products contain a combination of the same Harmful Ingredients.
- i. **Misleading Effect.** The misleading effect of the Challenged Representation on consumers is the same for all Products—consumers pay for reef-safe products, but receive products that are not reef-safe and otherwise can harm reefs, including coral reefs and the marine life that inhabits and depends on them.

E. No Adequate Remedy at Law

39. **No Adequate Remedy at Law.** Plaintiff and members of the Class are entitled to equitable relief as no adequate remedy at law exists.

- a. **Broader Statutes of Limitations.** The statutes of limitations for the causes of action pled herein vary. The limitations period is four years for claims brought under the UCL, which is one year longer than the statutes of limitations under the FAL and CLRA. In addition, the statutes of limitations vary for certain states’ laws for breach of warranty and unjust enrichment/restoration, between approximately 2 and 6 years. Thus, California Subclass members who purchased the Products more than 3 years prior to the filing of the complaint will be barred from recovery if equitable relief were not permitted under the UCL. Similarly,

1 Nationwide Class members who purchased the Products prior to the furthest
2 reach-back under the statute of limitations for breach of warranty, will be barred
3 from recovery if equitable relief were not permitted for restitution/unjust
4 enrichment.

5 b. **Broader Scope of Conduct.** In addition, the scope of actionable misconduct
6 under the unfair prong of the UCL is broader than the other causes of action
7 asserted herein. It includes, for example, Defendant's overall unfair marketing
8 scheme to promote and brand the Products with the Challenged Representation,
9 across a multitude of media platforms, including the Products' labels and
10 packaging, over a long period of time, in order to gain an unfair advantage over
11 competitor products and to take advantage of consumers' desire for products that
12 comport with the Challenged Representation. The UCL also creates a cause of
13 action for violations of law (such as statutory or regulatory requirements and court
14 orders related to similar representations and omissions made on the type of
15 products at issue). Thus, Plaintiff and Class members may be entitled to restitution
16 under the UCL, while not entitled to damages under other causes of action asserted
17 herein (e.g., the FAL requires actual or constructive knowledge of the falsity; the
18 CLRA is limited to certain types of plaintiffs (an individual who seeks or acquires,
19 by purchase or lease, any goods or services for personal, family, or household
20 purposes) and other statutorily enumerated conduct). Similarly, unjust
21 enrichment/restitution is broader than breach of warranty. For example, in some
22 states, breach of warranty may require privity of contract or pre-lawsuit notice,
23 which are not typically required to establish unjust enrichment/restitution. Thus,
24 Plaintiff and Class members may be entitled to recover under unjust
25 enrichment/restitution, while not entitled to damages under breach of warranty,
26 because they purchased the products from third-party retailers or did not provide
27 adequate notice of a breach prior to the commencement of this action.

28 c. **Injunctive Relief to Cease Misconduct and Dispel Misperception.** Injunctive

1 relief is appropriate on behalf of Plaintiff and members of the Class because
2 Defendant continues to misrepresent the Products with the Challenged
3 Representation. Injunctive relief is necessary to prevent Defendant from
4 continuing to engage in the unfair, fraudulent, and/or unlawful conduct described
5 herein and to prevent future harm—none of which can be achieved through
6 available legal remedies (such as monetary damages to compensate past harm).
7 Further, injunctive relief, in the form of affirmative disclosures is necessary to
8 dispel the public misperception about the Products that has resulted from years of
9 Defendant’s unfair, fraudulent, and unlawful marketing efforts. Such disclosures
10 would include, but are not limited to, publicly disseminated statements that the
11 Products Challenged Representation is not true and providing accurate
12 information about the Products’ true nature; and/or requiring prominent
13 qualifications and/or disclaimers on the Products’ front label concerning the
14 Products’ true nature. An injunction requiring affirmative disclosures to dispel
15 the public’s misperception, and prevent the ongoing deception and repeat
16 purchases based thereon, is also not available through a legal remedy (such as
17 monetary damages). In addition, Plaintiff is *currently* unable to accurately
18 quantify the damages caused by Defendant’s future harm, because discovery and
19 Plaintiff’s investigation have not yet completed, rendering injunctive relief all the
20 more necessary. For example, because the court has not yet certified any class, the
21 following remains unknown: the scope of the class, the identities of its members,
22 their respective purchasing practices, prices of past/future Product sales, and
23 quantities of past/future Product sales.

24 d. **Public Injunction.** Further, because a “public injunction” is available under the
25 UCL, damages will not adequately “benefit the general public” in a manner
26 equivalent to an injunction.

27 e. **California vs. Nationwide Class Claims.** Violation of the UCL, FAL, and CLRA
28 are claims asserted on behalf of Plaintiff and the California Subclass against

1 Defendant, while breach of warranty and unjust enrichment/restoration are
 2 asserted on behalf of Plaintiff and the Nationwide Class. Dismissal of farther-
 3 reaching claims, such as restitution, would bar recovery for non-California
 4 members of the Class. In other words, legal remedies available or adequate under
 5 the California-specific causes of action (such as the UCL, FAL, and CLRA) have
 6 no impact on this Court's jurisdiction to award equitable relief under the
 7 remaining causes of action asserted on behalf of non-California putative class
 8 members.

9 f. **Procedural Posture—Incomplete Discovery & Pre-Certification.** Lastly, this
 10 is an initial pleading in this action and discovery has not yet commenced and/or is
 11 at its initial stages. No class has been certified yet. No expert discovery has
 12 commenced and/or completed. The completion of fact/non-expert and expert
 13 discovery, as well as the certification of this case as a class action, are necessary
 14 to finalize and determine the adequacy and availability of all remedies, including
 15 legal and equitable, for Plaintiff(s)'s individual claims and any certified class or
 16 subclass. Plaintiff(s) therefore reserve(s) Plaintiff(s)'s right to amend this
 17 complaint and/or assert additional facts that demonstrate this Court's jurisdiction
 18 to order equitable remedies where no adequate legal remedies are available for
 19 either Plaintiff(s) and/or any certified class or subclass. Such proof, to the extent
 20 necessary, will be presented prior to the trial of any equitable claims for relief
 21 and/or the entry of an order granting equitable relief.

CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS

22
 23 40. **Class Definition.** Plaintiff brings this action as a class action pursuant to Federal
 24 Rules of Civil Procedure 23(b)(2) and 23(b)(3) on behalf of herself and all others similarly situated,
 25 and as members of the Classes defined as follows:

26 All residents of the United States who, within the applicable statute of limitations
 27 periods, purchased the Products for purposes other than resale ("**Nationwide Class**");
 28 and

1 All residents of California who, within four years prior to the filing of this Complaint,
2 purchased the Products for purposes other than resale (“**California Subclass**”).

3 (“Nationwide Class” and “California Subclass,” collectively, “**Class**”).

4 41. **Class Definition Exclusions.** Excluded from the Class are: (i) Defendant, its assigns,
5 successors, and legal representatives; (ii) any entities in which Defendant has controlling interests;
6 (iii) federal, state, and/or local governments, including, but not limited to, their departments,
7 agencies, divisions, bureaus, boards, sections, groups, counsels, and/or subdivisions; and (iv) any
8 judicial officer presiding over this matter and person within the third degree of consanguinity to
9 such judicial officer.

10 42. **Reservation of Rights to Amend the Class Definition.** Plaintiff reserves the right to
11 amend or otherwise alter the class definition presented to the Court at the appropriate time in
12 response to facts learned through discovery, legal arguments advanced by Defendant, or otherwise.

13 43. **Numerosity:** Members of the Class are so numerous that joinder of all members is
14 impracticable. Upon information and belief, the Nationwide Class consists of tens of thousands of
15 purchasers (if not more) dispersed throughout the United States, and the California Subclass
16 likewise consists of thousands of purchasers (if not more) dispersed throughout the State of
17 California. Accordingly, it would be impracticable to join all members of the Class before the Court.

18 44. **Common Questions Predominate:** There are numerous and substantial questions of
19 law or fact common to all members of the Class that predominate over any individual issues.
20 Included within the common questions of law or fact are:

- 21 a. Whether Defendant engaged in unlawful, unfair or deceptive business practices by
22 advertising and selling the Products;
- 23 b. Whether Defendant’s conduct of advertising and selling the Products as containing
24 only reef friendly ingredients when they do not constitutes an unfair method of
25 competition, or unfair or deceptive act or practice, in violation of Civil Code section
26 1750, *et seq.*;
- 27 c. Whether Defendant used deceptive representations in connection with the sale of the
28 Products in violation of Civil Code section 1750, *et seq.*;
- d. Whether Defendant represented that the Products have characteristics or quantities
that they do not have in violation of Civil Code section 1750, *et seq.*;
- e. Whether Defendant advertised the Products with intent not to sell them as advertised
in violation of Civil Code section 1750, *et seq.*;

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- f. Whether Defendant’s labeling and advertising of the Products are untrue or misleading in violation of Business and Professions Code section 17500, *et seq.*;
- g. Whether Defendant knew or by the exercise of reasonable care should have known its labeling and advertising was and is untrue or misleading in violation of Business and Professions Code section 17500, *et seq.*;
- h. Whether Defendant’s conduct is an unfair business practice within the meaning of Business and Professions Code section 17200, *et seq.*;
- i. Whether Defendant’s conduct is a fraudulent business practice within the meaning of Business and Professions Code section 17200, *et seq.*;
- j. Whether Defendant’s conduct is an unlawful business practice within the meaning of Business and Professions Code section 17200, *et seq.*;
- k. Whether Plaintiff and the Class paid more money for the Products than they actually received;
- l. How much more money Plaintiff and the Class paid for the Products than they actually received;
- m. Whether Defendant’s conduct constitutes breach of warranty;
- n. Whether Plaintiff and the Class are entitled to injunctive relief; and
- o. Whether Defendant was unjustly enriched by their unlawful conduct.

45. **Typicality:** Plaintiff’s claims are typical of the claims of the Class Members he seeks to represent because Plaintiff, like the Class Members, purchased Defendant’s misleading and deceptive Products. Defendant’s unlawful, unfair and/or fraudulent actions concern the same business practices described herein irrespective of where they occurred or were experienced. Plaintiff and the Class sustained similar injuries arising out of Defendant’s conduct. Plaintiff’s and Class Members’ claims arise from the same practices and course of conduct and are based on the same legal theories.

46. **Adequacy:** Plaintiff is an adequate representative of the Class he seeks to represent because his interests do not conflict with the interests of the Class Members Plaintiff seeks to represent. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect Class Members’ interests and has retained counsel experienced and competent in the prosecution of complex class actions, including complex questions that arise in consumer protection litigation.

47. **Superiority and Substantial Benefit:** A class action is superior to other methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy, since individual joinder of all members of the

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1 Class is impracticable and no other group method of adjudication of all claims asserted herein is
2 more efficient and manageable for at least the following reasons:

- 3 a. The claims presented in this case predominate over any questions of law or fact, if
4 any exist at all, affecting any individual member of the Class;
- 5 b. Absent a Class, the members of the Class will continue to suffer damage and
6 Defendant’s unlawful conduct will continue without remedy while Defendant profits
7 from and enjoy its ill-gotten gains;
- 8 c. Given the size of individual Class Members’ claims, few, if any, Class Members could
9 afford to or would seek legal redress individually for the wrongs Defendant committed
10 against them, and absent Class Members have no substantial interest in individually
11 controlling the prosecution of individual actions;
- 12 d. When the liability of Defendant has been adjudicated, claims of all members of the
13 Class can be administered efficiently and/or determined uniformly by the Court; and
- 14 e. This action presents no difficulty that would impede its management by the Court as
15 a class action, which is the best available means by which Plaintiff and Class Members
16 can seek redress for the harm caused to them by Defendant.

17 48. **Inconsistent Rulings.** Because Plaintiff seeks relief for all members of the Class, the
18 prosecution of separate actions by individual members would create a risk of inconsistent or varying
19 adjudications with respect to individual members of the Class, which would establish incompatible
20 standards of conduct for Defendant.

21 49. **Injunctive/Equitable Relief.** The prerequisites to maintaining a class action for
22 injunctive or equitable relief pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(b)(2) are met as Defendant has acted or
23 refused to act on grounds generally applicable to the Class, thereby making appropriate final
24 injunctive or equitable relief with respect to the Class as a whole.

25 50. **Manageability.** Plaintiff and Plaintiff’s counsel are unaware of any difficulties that
26 are likely to be encountered in the management of this action that would preclude its maintenance
27 as a class action.

28 ///

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COUNT ONE

Violation of California Unfair Competition Law

(Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 17200, *et seq.*)

(*On Behalf of the California Subclass*)

51. **Incorporation by Reference.** Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all allegations contained in this complaint, as though fully set forth herein.

52. **California Subclass.** This cause of action is brought pursuant to Business and Professions Code Section 17200, *et seq.*, on behalf of Plaintiff and a California Subclass who purchased the Products within the applicable statute of limitations.

53. **The UCL.** California Business & Professions Code, sections 17200, *et seq.* (the “UCL”) prohibits unfair competition and provides, in pertinent part, that “unfair competition shall mean and include unlawful, unfair or fraudulent business practices and unfair, deceptive, untrue or misleading advertising.”

54. **False Advertising Claims.** Defendant, in its advertising and packaging of the Products, made false and misleading statements and fraudulent omissions regarding the quality and characteristics of the Products—specifically, the Reef Friendly Representation—despite the fact the Products contain chemical ingredients that can harm and/or kill coral reefs. Such claims and omissions appear on the label and packaging of the Products, which are sold at retail stores and point-of-purchase displays.

55. **Defendant’s Deliberately False and Fraudulent Marketing Scheme.** Defendant does not have any reasonable basis for the claims about the Products made in Defendant’s advertising and on Defendant’s packaging or labeling because the Products contain ingredients that can cause harm and/or kill coral reefs. Defendant knew and knows that the Products are not truly reef friendly sunscreens, though Defendant intentionally advertised and marketed the Products to deceive reasonable consumers into believing that Products contain only ingredients that are safe for coral reefs.

56. **False Advertising Claims Cause Purchase of Products.** Defendant’s labeling and advertising of the Products led to, and continues to lead to, reasonable consumers, including

1 Plaintiff, believing that the Products are truly reef friendly and do not harm and/or kill coral reefs.

2 57. **Injury in Fact.** Plaintiff and the California Subclass have suffered injury in fact and
3 have lost money or property as a result of and in reliance upon Defendant’s False Advertising
4 Claims—namely Plaintiff and the California Subclass lost the purchase price for the Products they
5 bought from the Defendant.

6 58. **Conduct Violates the UCL.** Defendant’s conduct, as alleged herein, constitutes
7 unfair, unlawful, and fraudulent business practices pursuant to the UCL. The UCL prohibits unfair
8 competition and provides, in pertinent part, that “unfair competition shall mean and include
9 unlawful, unfair or fraudulent business practices and unfair, deceptive, untrue or misleading
10 advertising.” Cal. Bus & Prof. Code § 17200. In addition, Defendant’s use of various forms of
11 advertising media to advertise, call attention to, or give publicity to the sale of goods or merchandise
12 that are not as represented in any manner constitutes unfair competition, unfair, deceptive, untrue
13 or misleading advertising, and an unlawful business practice within the meaning of Business and
14 Professions Code Sections 17200 and 17531, which advertisements have deceived and are likely to
15 deceive the consuming public, in violation of Business and Professions Code Section 17200.

16 59. **No Reasonably Available Alternatives/Legitimate Business Interests.** Defendant
17 failed to avail themselves of reasonably available, lawful alternatives to further their legitimate
18 business interests.

19 60. **Business Practice.** All of the conduct alleged herein occurred and continues to occur
20 in Defendant’s business. Defendant’s wrongful conduct is part of a pattern, practice and/or
21 generalized course of conduct, which will continue on a daily basis until Defendant voluntarily
22 alters its conduct or Defendant is otherwise ordered to do so.

23 61. **Injunction.** Pursuant to Business and Professions Code Sections 17203 and 17535,
24 Plaintiff and the members of the California Subclass seek an order of this Court enjoining Defendant
25 from continuing to engage, use, or employ its practice of labeling and advertising the sale and use
26 of the Products. Likewise, Plaintiff and the members of the California Subclass seek an order
27 requiring Defendant to disclose such misrepresentations, and to preclude Defendant’s failure to
28 disclose the existence and significance of said misrepresentations.

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1 themselves could not reasonably avoid.” *Camacho v. Auto Club of Southern California*, 142 Cal.
2 App. 4th 1394, 1403 (2006).

3 65. **Injury.** Defendant’s action of mislabeling the Products with the Challenged
4 Representation does not confer any benefit to consumers; rather, doing so causes injuries to
5 consumers, who do not receive products commensurate with their reasonable expectations, overpay
6 for the Products, and receive Products of lesser standards than what they reasonably expected to
7 receive. Consumers cannot avoid any of the injuries caused by Defendant’s deceptive labeling and
8 advertising of the Products. Accordingly, the injuries caused by Defendant’s deceptive labeling and
9 advertising outweigh any benefits.

10 66. **Balancing Test.** Some courts conduct a balancing test to decide if a challenged
11 activity amounts to unfair conduct under California Business and Professions Code Section 17200.
12 They “weigh the utility of the defendant’s conduct against the gravity of the harm to the alleged
13 victim.” *Davis v. HSBC Bank Nevada, N.A.*, 691 F.3d 1152, 1169 (9th Cir. 2012).

14 67. **No Utility.** Here, Defendant’s conduct of labeling the Products with the Reef Friendly
15 Representation when the Products contain harmful chemical ingredients that harm and/or kill coral
16 reefs has no utility and financially harms purchasers. Thus, the utility of Defendant’s conduct is
17 vastly outweighed by the gravity of harm.

18 68. **Legislative Declared Policy.** Some courts require that “unfairness must be tethered
19 to some legislative declared policy or proof of some actual or threatened impact on competition.”
20 *Lozano v. AT&T Wireless Servs. Inc.*, 504 F. 3d 718, 735 (9th Cir. 2007).

21 69. **Unfair Conduct.** Defendant’s labeling and advertising of the Products, as alleged
22 herein, is false, deceptive, misleading, and unreasonable, and constitutes unfair conduct. Defendant
23 knew or should have known of its unfair conduct. Defendant’s misrepresentations constitute an
24 unfair business practice within the meaning of California Business and Professions Code Section
25 17200.

26 70. **Reasonably Available Alternatives.** There existed reasonably available alternatives
27 to further Defendant’s legitimate business interests, other than the conduct described herein.
28 Defendant could have refrained from labeling the Products with the Reef Friendly Representation.

1 competitors. This conduct engenders an unfair competitive advantage for Defendant, thereby
2 constituting an unfair, fraudulent and/or unlawful business practice under California Business &
3 Professions Code sections 17200-17208. Additionally, Defendant’s misrepresentations of material
4 facts, as set forth herein, violate California Civil Code sections 1572, 1573, 1709, 1710, 1711, and
5 1770, as well as the common law.

6 85. **Unlawful Conduct.** Defendant’s packaging, labeling, and advertising of the Products,
7 as alleged herein, are false, deceptive, misleading, and unreasonable, and constitute unlawful
8 conduct. Defendant knew or should have known of its unlawful conduct.

9 86. **Reasonably Available Alternatives.** Defendant had reasonably available alternatives
10 to further its legitimate business interests, other than the conduct described herein. Defendant could
11 have refrained from labeling the Products with the Reef Friendly Representation.

12 87. **Business Practice.** All of the conduct alleged herein occurs and continues to occur in
13 Defendant’s business. Defendant’s wrongful conduct is part of a pattern or generalized course of
14 conduct.

15 88. **Injunction.** Pursuant to Business and Professions Code Section 17203, Plaintiff and
16 the California Subclass seek an order of this Court enjoining Defendant from continuing to engage,
17 use, or employ its practice of false and deceptive advertising of the Products.

18 89. **Causation/Damages.** Plaintiff and the California Subclass have suffered injury in fact
19 and have lost money as a result of Defendant’s unlawful conduct. Plaintiff and the California
20 Subclass paid an unwarranted premium for the Products. Plaintiff and the California Subclass would
21 not have purchased the Products if they had known that Defendant’s purposely deceived consumers
22 into believing that the Products are truly safe for coral reefs. Accordingly, Plaintiff seeks damages,
23 restitution and/or disgorgement of ill-gotten gains pursuant to the UCL.

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COUNT TWO

Violation of California False Advertising Law

(Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 17500, *et seq.*)

(*On Behalf of the California Subclass*)

90. **Incorporation by reference.** Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all allegations contained in this complaint, as though fully set forth herein.

91. **California Subclass.** Plaintiff brings this claim individually and on behalf of the California Subclass who purchased the Products within the applicable statute of limitations.

92. **FAL Standard.** The False Advertising Law, codified at Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code section 17500, *et seq.*, prohibits “unfair, deceptive, untrue or misleading advertising[.]”

93. **False & Material Challenged Representations Disseminated to Public.** Defendant violated section 17500 when it advertised and marketed the Products through the unfair, deceptive, untrue, and misleading Reef Friendly Representation disseminated to the public through the Products’ labeling, packaging and advertising. These representations were false because the Products do not conform to them. The representations were material because they are likely to mislead a reasonable consumer into purchasing the Products.

94. **Knowledge.** In making and disseminating the representations alleged herein, Defendant knew or should have known that the representations were untrue or misleading, and acted in violation of § 17500.

95. **Intent to sell.** Defendant’s Challenged Representation was specifically designed to induce reasonable consumers, like Plaintiff and the California Subclass, to purchase the Products.

96. **Causation/Damages.** As a direct and proximate result of Defendant’s misconduct in violation of the FAL, Plaintiff and members of the California Subclass were harmed in the amount of the purchase price they paid for the Products. Further, Plaintiff and members of the Class have suffered and continue to suffer economic losses and other damages including, but not limited to, the amounts paid for the Products, and any interest that would have accrued on those monies, in an amount to be proven at trial. Accordingly, Plaintiff seeks a monetary award for violation of the FAL in damages, restitution, and/or disgorgement of ill-gotten gains to compensate Plaintiff and the

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1 California Subclass for said monies, as well as injunctive relief to enjoin Defendant's misconduct
2 to prevent ongoing and future harm that will result.

3 97. **Punitive Damages.** Defendant's unfair, fraudulent, and unlawful conduct described
4 herein constitutes malicious, oppressive, and/or fraudulent conduct warranting an award of punitive
5 damages as permitted by law. Defendant's misconduct is malicious as Defendant acted with the
6 intent to cause Plaintiff and consumers to pay for Products that they were not, in fact,
7 receiving. Defendant willfully and knowingly disregarded the rights of Plaintiff and consumers as
8 Defendant was aware of the probable dangerous consequences of its conduct and deliberately failed
9 to avoid misleading consumers, including Plaintiff. Defendant's misconduct is oppressive as, at all
10 relevant times, said conduct was so vile, base, and/or contemptible that reasonable people would
11 look down upon it and/or otherwise would despise such corporate misconduct. Said misconduct
12 subjected Plaintiff and consumers to cruel and unjust hardship in knowing disregard of their
13 rights. Defendant's misconduct is fraudulent as Defendant, at all relevant times, intentionally
14 misrepresented and/or concealed material facts with the intent to deceive Plaintiff and
15 consumers. The wrongful conduct constituting malice, oppression, and/or fraud was committed,
16 authorized, adopted, approved, and/or ratified by officers, directors, and/or managing agents of
17 Defendant.

18 **COUNT THREE**

19 **Violation of California Consumers Legal Remedies Act**

20 **(Cal. Civ. Code §§ 1750, et seq.)**

21 ***(On Behalf of the California Subclass)***

22 98. **Incorporation by Reference.** Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all
23 allegations contained in this complaint, as though fully set forth herein.

24 99. **California Subclass.** Plaintiff brings this claim individually and on behalf of the
25 California Subclass who purchased the Products within the applicable statute of limitations.

26 100. **CLRA Standard.** The CLRA provides that "unfair methods of competition and unfair
27 or deceptive acts or practices undertaken by any person in a transaction intended to result or which
28 results in the sale or lease of goods or services to any consumer are unlawful."

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1 101. **Goods/Services.** The Products are “goods,” as defined by the CLRA in California
2 Civil Code §1761(a).

3 102. **Defendant.** Defendant is a “person,” as defined by the CLRA in California Civil Code
4 §1761(c).

5 103. **Consumers.** Plaintiff and members of the California Subclass are “consumers,” as
6 defined by the CLRA in California Civil Code §1761(d).

7 104. **Transactions.** The purchase of the Products by Plaintiff and members of the
8 California Subclass are “transactions” as defined by the CLRA under California Civil Code section
9 1761(e).

10 105. **Violations of the CLRA.** Defendant violated the following sections of the CLRA by
11 selling the Products to Plaintiff and the California Subclass through the false, misleading, deceptive,
12 and fraudulent Challenged Representation:

13 a. Section 1770(a)(5) by representing that the Products have “characteristics, . . . uses [or] benefits
14 . . . which [they] do not have.”

15 b. Section 1770(a)(7) by representing that the Products “are of a particular standard, quality, or
16 grade . . . [when] they are of another.”

17 c. Section 1770(a)(9) by advertising the Products “with [the] intent not to sell them as advertised.”

18 106. **Knowledge.** Defendant’s uniform and material representations and omissions
19 regarding the Products were likely to deceive, and Defendant knew or should have known that its
20 representations and omissions were untrue and misleading.

21 107. **Malicious.** Defendant’s conduct is malicious, fraudulent, and wanton in that
22 Defendant intentionally misled and withheld material information from consumers, including
23 Plaintiff, to increase the sale of the Products.

24 108. **Plaintiff Could Not Have Avoided Injury.** Plaintiff and members of the California
25 Subclass could not have reasonably avoided such injury. Plaintiff and members of the California
26 Subclass were unaware of the existence of the facts that Defendant suppressed and failed to disclose,
27 and Plaintiff and members of the California Subclass would not have purchased the Products and/or
28 would have purchased them on different terms had they known the truth.

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1 114. **Nationwide Class & California Subclass.** Plaintiff brings this claim individually and
2 on behalf of the Nationwide Class and California Subclass (the Class) who purchased the Products
3 within the applicable statute of limitations.

4 115. **Express Warranty.** By advertising and selling the Products at issue, Defendant made
5 promises and affirmations of fact on the Products’ packaging and labeling, and through its marketing
6 and advertising, as described herein. This labeling and advertising constitute express warranties and
7 became part of the basis of the bargain between Plaintiff and members of the Class and Defendant.
8 Defendant purports, through the Products’ labeling and advertising, to create express warranties that
9 the Products, among other things, conform to the Challenged Representations.

10 116. **Implied Warranty of Merchantability.** By advertising and selling the Products at
11 issue, Defendant, a merchant of goods, made promises and affirmations of fact that the Products are
12 merchantable and conform to the promises or affirmations of fact made on the Products’ packaging
13 and labeling, and through its marketing and advertising, as described herein. This labeling and
14 advertising, combined with the implied warranty of merchantability, constitute warranties that
15 became part of the basis of the bargain between Plaintiff and members of the Class and Defendant--
16 --to wit, that the Products, among other things, conform to the Challenged Representations.

17 117. **Breach of Warranty.** Contrary to Defendant’s warranties, the Products do not
18 conform to the Challenged Representations and, therefore, Defendant breached its warranties about
19 the Products and their qualities.

20 118. **Causation/Remedies.** As a direct and proximate result of Defendant’s breach of
21 warranty, Plaintiff and members of the Class were harmed in the amount of the purchase price they
22 paid for the Products. Further, Plaintiff and members of the Class have suffered and continue to
23 suffer economic losses and other damages including, but not limited to, the amounts paid for the
24 Products, and any interest that would have accrued on those monies, in an amount to be proven at
25 trial. Accordingly, Plaintiff seeks a monetary award for breach of warranty in the form of damages,
26 restitution, and/or disgorgement of ill-gotten gains to compensate Plaintiff and the Class for said
27 monies, as well as injunctive relief to enjoin Defendant’s misconduct to prevent ongoing and future
28 harm that will result.

1 Products, Defendant would not generate revenue from the sales of the Products.

2 124. **Defendant's Unjust Receipt Through Deception.** Defendant's knowing acceptance
3 and retention of the benefit is inequitable and unjust because the benefit was obtained by
4 Defendant's fraudulent, misleading, and deceptive representations and omissions.

5 125. **Causation/Damages.** As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's unjust
6 enrichment, Plaintiff and members of the Class were harmed in the amount of the purchase price
7 they paid for the Products. Further, Plaintiff and members of the Class have suffered and continue
8 to suffer economic losses and other damages including, but not limited to, the amounts paid for the
9 Products, and any interest that would have accrued on those monies, in an amount to be proven at
10 trial. Accordingly, Plaintiff seeks a monetary award for unjust enrichment in damages, restitution,
11 and/or disgorgement of ill-gotten gains to compensate Plaintiff and the Class for said monies, as
12 well as injunctive relief to enjoin Defendant's misconduct to prevent ongoing and future harm that
13 will result.

14 126. **Punitive Damages.** Plaintiff seeks punitive damages pursuant to this cause of action
15 for unjust enrichment on behalf of Plaintiff and the Class. Defendant's unfair, fraudulent, and
16 unlawful conduct described herein constitutes malicious, oppressive, and/or fraudulent conduct
17 warranting an award of punitive damages as permitted by law. Defendant's misconduct is malicious
18 as Defendant acted with the intent to cause Plaintiff and consumers to pay for Products that they
19 were not, in fact, receiving. Defendant willfully and knowingly disregarded the rights of Plaintiff
20 and consumers as Defendant was aware of the probable dangerous consequences of its conduct and
21 deliberately failed to avoid misleading consumers, including Plaintiff. Defendant's misconduct is
22 oppressive as, at all relevant times, said conduct was so vile, base, and/or contemptible that
23 reasonable people would look down upon it and/or otherwise would despise such corporate
24 misconduct. Said misconduct subjected Plaintiff and consumers to cruel and unjust hardship in
25 knowing disregard of their rights. Defendant's misconduct is fraudulent as Defendant, at all relevant
26 times, intentionally misrepresented and/or concealed material facts with the intent to deceive
27 Plaintiff and consumers. The wrongful conduct constituting malice, oppression, and/or fraud was
28 committed, authorized, adopted, approved, and/or ratified by officers, directors, and/or managing

1 agents of Defendant.

2 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

3 127. WHEREFORE, Plaintiff, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated,
4 prays for judgment against Defendant as follows:

- 5 a. **Certification:** For an order certifying this action as a class action, appointing Plaintiff
6 as the Class Representative, and appointing Plaintiff’s Counsel as Class Counsel;
- 7 b. **Declaratory Relief:** For an order declaring that Defendant’s conduct violates the
8 statutes and laws referenced herein;
- 9 c. **Injunction:** For an order requiring Defendant to immediately cease and desist from
10 selling the unlawful Products in violation of law; enjoining Defendant from
11 continuing to market, advertise, distribute, and sell the Products in the unlawful
12 manner described herein; requiring Defendant to engage in an affirmative advertising
13 campaign to dispel the public misperception of the Products resulting from
14 Defendant’s unlawful conduct; and requiring all further and just corrective action,
15 consistent with permissible law and pursuant to only those causes of action so
16 permitted;
- 17 d. **Damages/Restitution/Disgorgement:** For an order awarding monetary
18 compensation in the form of damages, restitution, and/or disgorgement to Plaintiff
19 and the Class, consistent with permissible law and pursuant to only those causes of
20 action so permitted;
- 21 e. **Punitive Damages/Penalties:** For an order awarding punitive damages, statutory
22 penalties, and/or monetary fines, consistent with permissible law and pursuant to only
23 those causes of action so permitted;
- 24 f. **Attorneys’ Fees & Costs:** For an order awarding attorneys’ fees and costs, consistent
25 with permissible law and pursuant to only those causes of action so permitted;
- 26 g. **Pre/Post-Judgment Interest:** For an order awarding pre-judgment and post-
27 judgment interest, consistent with permissible law and pursuant to only those causes
28 of action so permitted; and
- h. **All Just & Proper Relief:** For such other and further relief as the Court deems just
and proper.

22 Dated: October 12, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

24 **CLARKSON LAW FIRM, P.C.**

By:

25 /s/ Katherine A. Bruce

26 RYAN J. CLARKSON

SHIREEN M. CLARKSON

27 KATHERINE A. BRUCE

KELSEY J. ELLING

Attorneys for Plaintiff

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Plaintiff hereby demands a trial by jury on all issues and causes of action so triable.

Dated: October 12, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

CLARKSON LAW FIRM, P.C.

By:

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