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REGIONAL HEARING CLERK  
EPA REGION 6

**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 6  
1201 Elm Street, Suite 500  
Dallas, Texas 75270**

|                         |   |                                      |
|-------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| <b>In the Matter of</b> | § |                                      |
|                         | § |                                      |
| <b>El Cerrito, Inc.</b> | § | <b>Docket No. FIFRA-06-2024-0309</b> |
| <b>Arlington, Texas</b> | § |                                      |
|                         | § |                                      |
| <b>Respondent.</b>      | § |                                      |

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**CONSENT AGREEMENT AND FINAL ORDER**

**Preliminary Statement**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6 ("EPA" or "Complainant"), and El Cerrito, Inc. ("Respondent") have agreed to a settlement of this action before the filing of a complaint, and thus this action is simultaneously commenced and concluded pursuant to Rules 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2) of the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits, 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2).

**Jurisdiction**

1. This proceeding is an administrative action for the assessment of civil penalties instituted pursuant to Section 14 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act ("FIFRA"), 7 U.S.C. § 136l.

2. This Consent Agreement and Final Order serves as notice that EPA has reason to believe that Respondent has violated Section 12 of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136j.

**Parties**

3. Complainant is the Director of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division of EPA, Region 6, as duly delegated by the Administrator of the EPA and the Regional Administrator, EPA, Region 6.

4. Respondent is El Cerrito, Inc., a corporation incorporated in the state of Texas and conducting business in the state of Texas.

**Statutory and Regulatory Background**

5. Congress enacted FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. 136 et. seq., in 1947 and amended it in 1972 and in 1996. The general purpose of FIFRA is to provide the basis for regulation, sale, distribution, and use of pesticides in the United States.

6. Section 12(a)(1)(A) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136j(a)(1)(A), states that it shall be unlawful for any person to distribute or sell any pesticide that is not registered under Section 3 of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136a, or whose registration has been cancelled or suspended.

7. Pursuant to the regulation at 40 C.F.R. § 152.15, in relevant part, no person may distribute or sell any pesticide product that is not registered under the Act, except as provided in 40 C.F.R. §§ 152.20, 152.25, and 152.30. A pesticide is any substance (or mixture of substances) intended for a pesticidal purpose, i.e., use for the purpose of preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest or use as a plant regulator, defoliant, or desiccant. A substance is considered to be intended for a pesticidal purpose, and thus to be a pesticide requiring registration, if the person who distributes or sells the substance claims, states, or

implies (by labeling or otherwise) that the substance (either by itself or in combination with any other substance) can or should be used as a pesticide.

8. Section 14(a)(1) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136l(a)(1), authorizes a civil penalty of not more than \$5,000 for each offense. The Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996, 31 U.S.C. § 3701, as amended, and the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015, 28 U.S.C. § 2461, and implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Part 19, increased these statutory maximum penalties to \$24,255 for violations that occur after November 2, 2015, and for which penalties are assessed on or after December 27, 2023.

#### **Definitions**

9. Section 2(s) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(s), defines “person” to mean any individual, partnership, association, corporation, or any organized group of persons whether incorporated or not.

10. Section 2(u) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(u), defines “pesticide” to mean any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest.

11. Section 2(t) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(t), defines “pest” to mean (1) any insect, rodent, nematode, fungus, weed, or (2) any other form of terrestrial or aquatic plant or animal life or virus, bacteria, or other micro-organism (except viruses, bacteria, or other micro-organism on or in living man or other living animals) which the Administrator declares to be a pest under Section 25(c)(1).

12. Section 2(gg) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(gg), defines “to distribute or sell” to mean to distribute, sell, offer for sale, hold for distribution, hold for sale, hold for shipment, ship,

deliver for shipment, release for shipment, or receive and (having so received) deliver or offer to deliver.

13. Section 2(p)(1) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(p)(1) defines “label” to mean the written, printed, or graphic matter on, or attached to, the pesticide or device of any of its containers or wrappers.

14. Section 2(p)(2) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(p)(2) defines “labeling” to mean all labels and all other written, printed, or graphic matter – (A) accompanying the pesticide or device at any time; or (B) to which reference is made on the label or in literature accompanying the pesticide or device.

**EPA Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law**

15. Respondent is, and at all times referred to herein was, a “person” as defined by Section 2(s) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(s).

16. Respondent owns and operates a grocery store located at: 2000 E. Pioneer Pkwy., Ste. 100, Arlington, TX 76010 (the “Facility”).

17. Pursuant to Section 9 of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136g, EPA conducted an inspection of the Facility on May 31, 2023, to determine Respondent’s compliance with FIFRA and the federal regulations promulgated thereunder (the “Inspection”).

18. During the Inspection, EPA discovered that Respondent distributed or sold, as those terms are defined by Section 2(gg) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(gg), at the Facility four products that are unregistered pesticides: (1) Arcoiris All Purpose Cleaner - Orange; (2) Arcoiris All Purpose Cleaner - French Country; (3) Arcoiris All Purpose Cleaner - Tropical Freshness; and (4) Axion Lime Lemon Cream Dish Detergent (the “Products”).

19. On July 5, 2023, EPA sent Respondent a Stop Sale, Use, or Removal Order.

**EPA Findings of Violation**

20. The facts stated in the EPA Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law above are herein incorporated.

21. Complainant hereby states and alleges that Respondent has violated FIFRA and federal regulations promulgated thereunder as follows:

**Count 1**

22. At the time of the inspection, the label for Respondent's product, Arcoiris All Purpose Cleaner (Orange, French Country, and Tropical Freshness), stated that the product contains "Bactericide" and that it "Elimina Bacterias" (Eliminates Bacteria), implying that the product could or should be used as a pesticide.

23. Because Respondent claimed by labeling that the Arcoiris All Purpose Cleaner product can or should be used as a pesticide, the product was intended for a pesticidal purpose and required registration pursuant to Section 3 of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136a.

24. At the time of the inspection, the Arcoiris All Purpose Cleaner product was not registered pursuant to Section 3 of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136a.

25. Respondent's distribution or sale of Arcoiris All Purpose Cleaner, a pesticide that was not registered under Section 3 of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136a, is a violation of Section 12(a)(1)(A) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136j(a)(1)(A).

**Count 2**

26. At the time of the Inspection, the label for Respondent's product, Axion Lime Lemon Cream Dish Detergent, stated that the product "Eliminates 99.9% of bacteria *S. aureus*, *P. aeruginosa*, & *E. Coli*" and instructs "Antibacterial Action: Apply, Axion®, let stand for 10 minutes and rinse," implying that the product could or should be used as a pesticide.

27. Because Respondent claimed by labeling that the Axion Lime Lemon Cream Dish Detergent product can or should be used as a pesticide, the product was intended for a pesticidal purpose and required registration pursuant to Section 3 of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136a.

28. At the time of the Inspection, the Axion Lime Lemon Cream Dish Detergent product was not registered pursuant to Section 3 of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136a.

29. Respondent's distribution or sale of Axion Lime Lemon Cream Dish Detergent, a pesticide that was not registered under Section 3 of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136a, is a violation of Section 12(a)(1)(A) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136j(a)(1)(A).

**CONSENT AGREEMENT**

30. For the purpose of this proceeding, as required by 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(b)(2), Respondent:

- a. admits the jurisdictional allegations set forth herein;
- b. neither admits nor denies the specific factual allegations stated herein;
- c. consents to the assessment of a civil penalty, as stated herein;
- d. consents to the issuance of any specified compliance or corrective action order;
- e. consents to any conditions specified herein;
- f. consents to any stated Permit Action;

- g. waives any right to contest the allegations set forth herein; and
- h. waives its right to appeal the Final Order accompanying this Consent Agreement.

31. Respondent consents to the issuance of this Consent Agreement and Final Order and consent for the purposes of settlement to the payment of the civil penalty specified herein.

32. Respondent and EPA agree to conciliate this matter without the necessity of a formal hearing and to bear their respective costs and attorneys' fees.

**Penalty Payment**

33. Respondent agrees that, in settlement of the claims alleged herein, Respondent shall pay a civil penalty of Ten Thousand Two Hundred Forty Dollars (\$10,240.00), as set forth below.

34. Respondent shall pay the penalty within thirty (30) days of receiving notice of the effective date of the Final Order. Such payment shall identify Respondent by name and docket number and shall be by certified or cashier's check made payable to the "United States Treasury" and sent to:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Fines and Penalties  
Cincinnati Finance Center  
PO Box 979078  
St. Louis, Missouri 63197-9000

or by alternate payment method described at <http://www.epa.gov/financial/makepayment>.

35. A copy of the check or other information confirming payment shall simultaneously be sent to the following:

Lorena S. Vaughn  
Regional Hearing Clerk

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6  
1201 Elm Street, Suite 500 (ORC)  
Dallas, Texas 75270-2102  
vaughn.lorena@epa.gov; and

Kiera Hancock  
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division  
Waste Enforcement Branch  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6  
1201 Elm Street, Suite 500 (ECDST)  
Dallas, Texas 75270-2101  
Hancock.Kiera@epa.gov

36. Respondent understands that its failure to timely pay any portion of the civil penalty may result in the commencement of a civil action in Federal District Court to recover the full remaining balance, along with penalties and accumulated interest. In such case, interest shall begin to accrue on a civil or stipulated penalty from the date of delinquency until such civil or stipulated penalty and any accrued interest are paid in full. 31 C.F.R. § 901.9(b)(1). Interest will be assessed at a rate of the United States Treasury Tax and loan rates in accordance with 31 U.S.C. § 3717. Additionally, a charge will be assessed to cover the costs of debt collection including processing and handling costs, and a non-payment penalty charge of six percent (6%) per year compounded annually will be assessed on any portion of the debt which remains delinquent more than ninety (90) days after payment is due. 31 U.S.C. § 3717(e)(2).

**Effect of Settlement and Reservation of Rights**

37. Full payment of the penalty proposed in this Consent Agreement shall only resolve Respondent's liability for federal civil penalties for the violations alleged herein. Complainant reserves the right to take any enforcement action with respect to any other violations of the FIFRA or any other applicable law.



38. The effect of settlement described in the immediately preceding paragraph is conditioned upon the accuracy of Respondents' representations to EPA, as memorialized in paragraph directly below.

39. Respondent certifies by the signing of this Consent Agreement that it is presently in compliance with all requirements of FIFRA and its implementing regulations.

40. Full payment of the penalty proposed in this Consent Agreement shall not in any case affect the right of the Agency or the United States to pursue appropriate injunctive or other equitable relief or criminal sanctions for any violations of law. This Consent Agreement and Final Order does not waive, extinguish, or otherwise affect Respondent's obligation to comply with all applicable provisions of the FIFRA and regulations promulgated thereunder.

41. Complainant reserves the right to enforce the terms and conditions of this Consent Agreement and Final Order.

#### **General Provisions**

42. By signing this Consent Agreement, the undersigned representative of Respondent certifies that he or she is fully authorized to execute and enter into the terms and conditions of this Consent Agreement and has the legal capacity to bind the party it represents to this Consent Agreement.

43. This Consent Agreement shall not dispose of the proceeding without a final order from the Regional Judicial Officer or Regional Administrator ratifying the terms of this Consent Agreement. This Consent Agreement and Final Order shall be effective upon the filing of the Final Order by the Regional Hearing Clerk for EPA, Region 6. Unless otherwise stated, all time periods stated herein shall be calculated in calendar days from such date.

44. The penalty specified herein shall represent civil penalties assessed by EPA and shall not be deductible for purposes of Federal, State, and local taxes.

45. This Consent Agreement and Final Order shall apply to and be binding upon Respondent and Respondent's agents, successors and/or assigns. Respondent shall ensure that all contractors, employees, consultants, firms, or other persons or entities acting for Respondent with respect to matters included herein comply with the terms of this Consent Agreement and Final Order.

46. The EPA and Respondent agree to the use of electronic signatures for this matter pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.6. EPA and Respondent further agree to electronic service of this Consent Agreement and Final Order by email to the following:

To EPA:

*george.elizabeth.a@epa.gov*

To Respondent:

*holthirsch@sbcglobal.net*

**RESPONDENT:**  
**EL CERRITO, INC.**

Date: March-27-2024

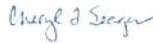
  
Signature

Ruben Martinez  
Name

President  
Title

**COMPLAINANT:**  
**U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

Date: March 28, 2024



Digitally signed by Cheryl T.  
Seager  
Date: 2024.03.28 11:04:11  
-05'00'

**Cheryl T. Seager**  
**Director**  
**Enforcement and**  
**Compliance Assurance Division**  
**U.S. EPA, Region 6**

**FINAL ORDER**

Pursuant to Section 14(a) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136/(a), and the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits, 40 C.F.R. Part 22, the foregoing Consent Agreement resolving this matter is hereby ratified and incorporated by reference into this Final Order.

Respondent is ORDERED to comply with all of the terms of the Consent Agreement. In accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 22.31(b), the effective date of the foregoing Consent Agreement and this Final Order is the date on which this Final Order is filed with the Regional Hearing Clerk.

This Final Order shall resolve only those causes of action alleged in the Consent Agreement. Nothing in this Final Order shall be construed to waive, extinguish, or otherwise affect Respondents' (or its officers, agents, servants, employees, successors, or assigns) obligation to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations, including the regulations that were the subject of this action.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

THOMAS  
RUCKI

Digitally signed by  
THOMAS RUCKI  
Date: 2024.03.28 13:01:27  
-04'00'

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas Rucki  
Regional Judicial Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing Consent Agreement and Final Order was filed with me, the Regional Hearing Clerk, U.S. EPA, Region 6, 1201 Elm Street, Dallas, Texas 75270-2102, and that I sent a true and correct copy on this day in the following manner to the addresses:

Copy via Email to Complainant, EPA:

george.elizabeth.a@epa.gov

Copy via Email to Respondent:

holthirsch@sbcglobal.net  
6301 Gaston Ave., Suite 420  
Dallas, Texas 75214

LORENA  
VAUGHN

Digitally signed by LORENA  
VAUGHN  
Date: 2024.03.28 12:09:43 -05'00'

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Regional Hearing Clerk  
U.S. EPA, Region 6