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**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

BEVERLY BEAL and COURTNEY  
WHETSTONE, on behalf of themselves  
and all others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

MW POLAR FOODS CORPORATION,

Defendant.

Case No. **'25CV1358 WQHJLB**

**CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT**

1 Plaintiffs Beverly Beal and Courtney Whetstone (“Plaintiffs”) bring this action  
2 on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated against MW Polar Foods  
3 Corporation (“Defendant”). Plaintiffs make the following allegations pursuant to the  
4 investigations of their counsel and based upon information and belief, except as to  
5 the allegations specifically pertaining to themselves, which are based on personal  
6 knowledge.

### 7 **NATURE OF THE ACTION**

8 1. Plaintiffs bring this class action lawsuit on behalf of themselves and all  
9 others similarly situated who purchased Defendant’s canned Salmon Fillet in Brine  
10 and Juice (the “Product”).<sup>1</sup>

11 2. The flesh of farm-raised salmon is naturally grey or white. So, to make  
12 it a more appealing pink, salmon farmers add color additives to the farmed salmon’s  
13 feed. The additives used are one of two chemicals: astaxanthin or canthaxanthin. As  
14 such, “[t]o prevent economic fraud in salmonid fish containing added astaxanthin,  
15 the [FDA] requires declaration of the presence of the color additive” on the product  
16 packaging. 63 Fed. Reg. 18738 (1998).

17 3. Defendant’s Product is farm-raised in net-pens in Norway and Chile.  
18 As such, the only way that the fish in Defendant’s Product get their signature salmon  
19 pink is from color additives Defendant intentionally added to the salmon’s feed.

20 4. Indeed, Independent testing conducted by Plaintiffs’ counsel confirmed  
21 the presence of astaxanthin in the Product. Because the Product contains a color  
22 additive, Defendant was required to disclose it on the label but failed to do so.

23 5. Plaintiffs sustained injuries by purchasing Defendant’s Product which  
24 was deceptively marketed as containing salmon fillets with a healthy, natural pink  
25 coloring when, instead, Defendant’s farm-raised salmon necessarily contained

26  
27 <sup>1</sup> Discovery may reveal that additional products are within the scope of this  
28 Complaint. Accordingly, Plaintiffs reserve the right to include additional items  
identified through the course of discovery.

1 **artificial** coloring. The Product is advertised, sold, and distributed by Defendant or  
2 its agents, to consumers, including Plaintiffs and Members of the Classes, throughout  
3 the United States.

4 6. Accordingly, Plaintiffs bring claims against Defendant individually and  
5 on behalf of classes of all others similarly situated for (1) violation of California's  
6 Consumers Legal Remedies Act, Cal. Civ. Code § 1750, *et seq.*; (2) violation of  
7 California's Unfair Competition Law, Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200, *et seq.*; (3)  
8 violation of California's False Advertising Law, Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17500, *et*  
9 *seq.*; (4) violation of New York Gen. Bus. Law § 349; (5) violation of New York  
10 Gen. Bus. Law § 350; (6) breach of express warranty; and (7) unjust enrichment.

### 11 **PARTIES**

12 7. Plaintiff Beverly Beal is a citizen of California who resides in  
13 Escondido, California. Plaintiff Beal most recently purchased the Product in or  
14 around January 2024 from a Walmart store in San Marcos, California. Prior to her  
15 purchase, Plaintiff Beal reviewed the Product packaging and relied on Defendant's  
16 representations, labeling, and packing and understood that the Product was warranted  
17 as being a salmon product that contained a naturally occurring healthy coloring with  
18 no artificial coloring added, indicative of wild caught salmon. As such, those  
19 representations and warranties were part of the basis of the bargain, in that she would  
20 not have purchased the Product on the same terms had she known those  
21 representations were not true. In making her purchase, Plaintiff Beal paid a price  
22 premium due to the false and misleading representation that the Product contains  
23 naturally colored salmon filet free of artificial dyes and coloring. Accordingly,  
24 Plaintiff Beal relied on these representations and warranties in deciding to purchase  
25 the Product. Had Plaintiff Beal known that the Product contained artificial coloring  
26 she would not have purchased the Product or would have purchased it under  
27 substantially different terms. Plaintiff Beal did not receive the benefit of her bargain  
28 because the Product was not, in fact, free of artificial coloring.

1           8. Plaintiff Beal remains interested in purchasing the Product from  
2 Defendant. However, she is unable to determine if the Product is actually free of  
3 artificial coloring. She understands that the composition of the Product may change  
4 over time, but as long as Defendant continues to represent the Product as being free  
5 of artificial coloring, when it is not, she will be unable to make informed decisions  
6 about whether to purchase the Product and will be unable to evaluate the different  
7 prices between Defendant's Product and competitors' products. Plaintiff Beal is  
8 further likely to be repeatedly misled by Defendant, unless and until Defendant is  
9 compelled to ensure that the Product's marketing as being free of artificial coloring,  
10 is, in fact, true.

11           9. Plaintiff Courtney Whetstone is a citizen of New York who resides in  
12 Buffalo, New York. Plaintiff Whetstone has purchased the Product multiple times  
13 for the past three years, the most recent being in March of 2025 from a Walmart in  
14 Buffalo, New York. Prior to her purchase, Plaintiff Whetstone reviewed the Product  
15 packaging and relied on Defendant's representations, labeling, and packing and  
16 understood that the Product was warranted as being a salmon product that contained  
17 a naturally occurring healthy coloring with no artificial coloring added, indicative of  
18 wild caught salmon. As such, those representations and warranties were part of the  
19 basis of the bargain, in that she would not have purchased the Product on the same  
20 terms had she known those representations were not true. As such, those  
21 representations and warranties were part of the basis of the bargain, in that she would  
22 not have purchased the Product on the same terms had she known those  
23 representations were not true. Accordingly, Plaintiff Whetstone relied on these  
24 representations and warranties in deciding to purchase the Product. In making her  
25 purchase, Plaintiff Whetstone paid a price premium due to the false and misleading  
26 claim that the Product is free of artificial dyes and coloring. Had Plaintiff Whetstone  
27 known that the Product contained artificial coloring she would not have purchased  
28 the Product or would have purchased it under substantially different terms. Plaintiff

1 Whetstone did not receive the benefit of her bargain because the Product was not, in  
2 fact, free of artificial coloring.

3 10. Plaintiff Whetstone remains interested in purchasing the Product from  
4 Defendant. However, she is unable to determine if the Product is actually free of  
5 artificial coloring. She understands that the composition of the Product may change  
6 over time, but as long as Defendant continues to represent the Product as being free  
7 of artificial coloring, when it is not, she will be unable to make informed decisions  
8 about whether to purchase the Product and will be unable to evaluate the different  
9 prices between Defendant's Product and competitors' products. Plaintiff Whetstone  
10 is further likely to be repeatedly misled by Defendant, unless and until Defendant is  
11 compelled to ensure that the Product's marketing as being free of artificial coloring,  
12 is, in fact, true.

13 11. Defendant MW Polar Corporation is a Canadian corporation with its  
14 principal place of business in Norwalk, California. Defendant markets, sells, and  
15 distributes the Product throughout the United States, including in California and New  
16 York. Defendant manufactured, marketed, and sold the Product at issue at all times  
17 during the relevant Class Period.

### 18 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

19 12. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §  
20 1332(d)(2)(A) because there are more than 100 Members of the Classes, the  
21 aggregate claims of all members of the proposed Classes exceed \$5,000,000.00,  
22 exclusive of interest and costs, and at least one Member of the Classes is a citizen of  
23 a state different from Defendant.

24 13. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant because  
25 Defendant's principal place of business is in California. Further, Defendant conducts  
26 substantial business within California, including this District, and purposefully avails  
27 itself to the benefits of this District by selling its Product in this District.  
28

1 Additionally, a substantial portion of the events giving rise to Plaintiff Beal's claims  
2 occurred in this District.

3 14. Venue is proper in this District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391 because a  
4 substantial portion of the events, omissions, and acts giving rise to the claims herein  
5 occurred in this District and Plaintiff Beal resides in this District.

### 6 **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

#### 7 **A. The Rise of Farm Raised Salmon**

8 15. The farmed salmon industry is estimated to be worth \$20-billion a  
9 year.<sup>2</sup> "In 2022, more fish were farmed than were captured from the ocean."<sup>3</sup>

10 16. Salmon—being high in omega-3 fatty acids, DHA, and EPA<sup>4</sup>—is one of  
11 the healthiest foods to consume and the second most popular seafood item in the  
12 United States.<sup>5</sup>

13 17. Salmon is associated with lowering this risk of stroke, heart disease, and  
14 high blood pressure. It is also known to protect against inflammation, obesity, and  
15 cognitive decline.<sup>6</sup> These factors have contributed to a high demand for salmon.

16 18. Because salmon consumption has risen in popularity, wild salmon  
17 populations on both U.S. coasts have declined. Human impacts like dams,  
18 overfishing, pollution, and climate change, are largely to blame.<sup>7</sup>

19 \_\_\_\_\_  
20 <sup>2</sup> Douglas Frantz and Catherine Collins, *3 Reasons to Avoid Farmed Salmon*, TIME  
21 MAGAZINE (July 21, 2022), <https://time.com/6199237/is-farmed-salmon-healthy-sustainable/>.

22 <sup>3</sup> Priscilla Du Preez, *Salmon is Probably Not as Healthy as You Think*, FARM  
23 SANCTUARY (Aug. 9, 2024), <https://www.farmsanctuary.org/news-stories/salmon-not-healthy/>.

24 <sup>4</sup> *Omega-3 Fatty Acids*, NAT'L INST. OF HEALTH (Dec. 17, 2024),  
<https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Omega3FattyAcids-HealthProfessional/>.

25 <sup>5</sup> Mahita Gajanan, *How Farmers Turn Their Salmon Pink*, TIME MAGAZINE (June 13,  
26 2017), <https://time.com/4790794/farmed-salmon-pink/>.

27 <sup>6</sup> See NIH, *supra* note 4.

28 <sup>7</sup> *What is Hurting Salmon?*, WASHINGTON STATE RECREATION AND CONSERVATION  
OFFICE, <https://rco.wa.gov/salmon-recovery/problem/>.

1           19. 28 different salmonid species call the West Coast home. Their  
2 populations, however, have been listed as threatened or endangered under the  
3 Endangered Species Act.<sup>8</sup> But despite their protected status, most of those species  
4 continued to struggle and decline.<sup>9</sup>

5           20. On the East Coast, Atlantic salmon is the only native salmon species.  
6 Like their West Coast relatives, human activities have decimated the wild Atlantic  
7 salmon populations, culminating in the total collapse of Atlantic salmon fisheries<sup>10</sup>  
8 by 1948.<sup>11</sup> Those fisheries never again reopened and today all Atlantic salmon  
9 available for purchase in the United States is farmed.<sup>12</sup>

10           21. With the wild salmon population shrinking but consumer demand for  
11 salmon growing, aquaculture (or fish farming) became popularized in the 1960s.<sup>13</sup>

12           22. Aquaculture works through the use of net pens that float a few hundred  
13 yards offshore that are anchored in place through the use of heavy cables attached to  
14 the sea floor.<sup>14</sup> Hatchery-born salmon are transferred to these pens at 10 months  
15

16 <sup>8</sup> West Coast Regional Office, *Report Card on Recovery: Reviews Assess 28 Salmon*  
17 *and Steelhead Species Returning to West Coast Rivers*, NAT'L OCEANIC AND  
18 ATMOSPHERIC ADMIN. FISHERIES (last updated Dec. 11, 2024),  
19 <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/endangered-species-conservation/report-card-recovery-reviews-assess-28-salmon-and#:~:text=Under%20the%20Endangered%20Species%20Act,review%20answers%20questions%20such%20as:>.

20 <sup>9</sup> *Id.*

21 <sup>10</sup> The term “fishery” refers the areas of bodies of water where certain populations of  
22 fish can be caught for commercial or recreational purposes. (For more information  
23 see, *What is a Fishery*, MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL, <https://www.msc.org/en-au/what-we-are-doing/our-collective-impact/what-is-a-fishery#:~:text=A%20basic%20definition%20of%20a,species%20of%20fish%20or%20shellfish.> .

24 <sup>11</sup> *Atlantic Salmon*, NAT'L OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMIN. FISHERIES,  
25 <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/atlantic-salmon-protected/overview> .

26 <sup>12</sup> *Id.*

27 <sup>13</sup> See Bruce Barcott, *Aquaculture's Troubled Harvest*, MOTHER JONES  
(November/December 2001),  
28 <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2001/11/aquacultures-troubled-harvest/>.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*



old,<sup>15</sup> where they are fed pellets made of fish meal, fish oil, vitamins, color additives, and antibiotics. Each pen can be home to between 15,000 and 50,000 salmon with a single farm operating between eight and ten pens total.



*Figure 1: Norwegian Salmon Farm*

23. At first, the practice was hailed as a sustainable solution to the increasing demand.<sup>16</sup> But as time went on, the harms of aquaculture became more and more apparent: farms pushed out the few remaining wild salmon populations,<sup>17</sup> hinder conservation and wild salmon population restoration efforts.

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*

<sup>16</sup> *Id.* (“Back when we envisioned the future in utopian terms, aquaculture was an integral part of the dream. As surely as we would all drive flying cars, wet-suit-clad cultivators would farm the seas and feed the world with their bounty.”)

<sup>17</sup> *Id.*



1           24. Indeed, in “[e]very place where Atlantic salmon is raised in net-pens,  
2 the wild population[s of other salmon species] has declined by as much as 70  
3 percent[.]”<sup>18</sup>

4           25. This is because, in part, farmed salmon are doused with heavy  
5 antibiotics and antiparasitics, resulting in the “[f]armed fish contract[ing] antibiotic-  
6 resistant strains of furunculosis, a fatal disease that produces ugly skin ulcers; [which  
7 then] wild salmon that migrated past their pens also contracted[.]”<sup>19</sup>

8           26. Moreover, “[f]armers count on the tide to disperse net pen effluent, but  
9 the water often doesn’t flush it all away. A salmon farm of 200,000 fish releases an  
10 amount of fecal solids roughly equivalent to a town of 62,000 people.”<sup>20</sup> As such, in  
11 areas near salmon farms, “[s]hrimp fishermen began pulling up traps full of farm  
12 muck, a gooey black mixture of feces, excess antibiotic-laden fish feed, and decayed  
13 salmon carcasses that filtered out of the pens.”<sup>21</sup>

14           27. This muck also wreaks havoc on natural ecosystems. Through a process  
15 called eutrophication, this muck introduces excess nutrients like nitrogen and  
16 phosphorous into the surrounding waters resulting in an algal bloom. Bacteria feed  
17 not only on the muck but on the decaying algae that is inevitably produced in a  
18 eutrophic environment. The bacteria then consume vast amounts of oxygen, turning  
19 the sea-bed into an oxygen-depleted “dead zone,” scientifically known as a hypoxic  
20 environment, where few organisms can live.

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22  
23 <sup>18</sup> Melissa Clark, *The Salmon on Your Plate Has a Troubling Cost. These Farms*  
24 *Offer Hope*, NEW YORK TIMES (Oct. 16, 2023),  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/16/dining/farm-raised-salmon->

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

25 <sup>20</sup> *Id.*; see also Stuart Miller, *How the King of Fish is Being Farmed to Death*, THE  
26 OBSERVER (Jan. 6, 2001),  
27 <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2001/jan/07/fishing.food#:~:text=It%20is%20estimated%20that%20a,a%20town%20of%2020%2C000%20people.>

28 <sup>21</sup> Barcott, *supra* note 13.

1           28. Moreover, the environment that farm raised salmon are raised in is so  
2 bad that millions of farm-raised salmon die before ever reaching maturity. In 2019  
3 alone 25,770 tons, amounting to over ten million salmon, died in their cages.<sup>22</sup> “The  
4 main causes of [those] deaths are said to have been viral, bacterial and fungal  
5 infections, along with algal blooms, and ‘treatment losses’ from mistakes with  
6 chemicals or de-licing machines.”<sup>23</sup>

7           29. Because of these impacts, environmental groups like The Sierra Club  
8 have concluded that “aquaculture poses numerous potential environmental risks,  
9 including the spread of diseases and parasites to nearby wild fish populations and  
10 impacts on wild forage fish populations.”<sup>24</sup> Therefore, many environmental  
11 organizations advise against consuming farm-raised salmon.

12           30. “The fish-farming industry has fed us a line about eating farmed salmon  
13 to protect wild stock ... [but a]ctually the reverse is true. If you purchase farmed  
14 salmon, you’re contributing to the risk to the wild fish.”<sup>25</sup>

15           **B. Consumers Prefer Wild Caught Salmon Over Farm-**  
16           **Raised Salmon**

17           31. Unlike wild salmon, “[f]armed salmon serves as an inferior food source,  
18 accumulating more toxic chemicals in fatty tissue with fewer healthy nutrient  
19 properties[.]”<sup>26</sup> Research shows that consuming farmed salmon leads to higher  
20

21  
22 <sup>22</sup> Rob Edwards, *Farmed Salmon Deaths From Disease Reach Record High*, THE  
23 FERRET (July 13, 2020), [https://theferret.scot/farmed-salmon-deaths-disease-reach-](https://theferret.scot/farmed-salmon-deaths-disease-reach-record-high/)  
24 [record-high/](https://theferret.scot/farmed-salmon-deaths-disease-reach-record-high/).

25 <sup>23</sup> *Id.*

26 <sup>24</sup> *Aquaculture*, THE SIERRA CLUB, [https://www.sierraclub.org/grassroots-](https://www.sierraclub.org/grassroots-network/marine-team/aquaculture)  
27 [network/marine-team/aquaculture](https://www.sierraclub.org/grassroots-network/marine-team/aquaculture) .

28 <sup>25</sup> Barcott, *supra* note 13.

<sup>26</sup> *Farmed Salmon Just as Toxic to Human Health as Junk Food*, BEYOND PESTICIDES  
(June 16, 2022), [https://beyondpesticides.org/dailynewsblog/2022/06/farmed-](https://beyondpesticides.org/dailynewsblog/2022/06/farmed-salmon-just-as-toxic-to-human-health-as-junk-food/)  
[salmon-just-as-toxic-to-human-health-as-junk-food/](https://beyondpesticides.org/dailynewsblog/2022/06/farmed-salmon-just-as-toxic-to-human-health-as-junk-food/).

1 instances of metabolic disorders like diabetes and obesity,<sup>27</sup> contrary to the largely  
2 understood health benefits of salmon generally.

3 32. “Some studies warn that a single meal per month of farmed Atlantic  
4 salmon can expose consumers to contaminant levels exceeding standards from the  
5 World Health Organization. The risk is greatest for infants, children, and pregnant  
6 women because of the potential harm from contaminants to developing brains.”<sup>28</sup>

7 33. Accordingly, nutritionists explain that for consumers get the health  
8 benefits of salmon—which consumers like Plaintiffs reasonably expect—they need  
9 to eat wild rather than farmed salmon.<sup>29</sup>

10 34. Moreover, a blind taste test shows that while consumers preferred the  
11 taste of farmed salmon over wild salmon, as soon as the consumers were aware that  
12 the salmon was farmed, they indicated that they would still choose a wild salmon  
13 product over a farmed salmon product.<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, whether the product is wild  
14 caught or farm raised is material to a consumer’s purchasing decision.

15 35. Indeed, consumer research confirms that color plays a decisive role for  
16 consumers evaluating the quality of salmon at point-of-sale. In fact, color is  
17 considered the consumers’ primary consideration in purchasing salmon.<sup>31</sup>

18 36. Consumers believe that color indicates a salmon’s species, age, origin,  
19 price, expected flavor/texture, *freshness*, and quality. Consumers equate redder  
20

21 \_\_\_\_\_  
<sup>27</sup> *Id.*

22 <sup>28</sup> Frantz and Collins, *supra* note 2.

23 <sup>29</sup> *Id.*

24 <sup>30</sup> Helene Christine Reinbach, *We Prefer Farmed Salmon – As Long As We Don’t*  
25 *Know What We’re Eating*, UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN FACULTY OF SCI. (Nov. 22,  
26 2021), <https://science.ku.dk/english/press/news/2021/we-prefer-farmed-salmon--as-long-as-we-dont-know-what-were-eating/>.

27 <sup>31</sup> Gajanan, *supra* note 5 (“If we didn’t do it, customers wouldn’t buy it ...  
28 Consumers buy what they’re familiar with. They won’t go into the store to buy  
white salmon.”).

1 flesh as a sign of higher quality salmon and are willing to pay more for deeply  
2 colored salmon.

3 37. Wild Salmon, which is usually a much deeper red than farmed salmon  
4 “fares better on the market because the deep red carries cultural significance, a  
5 reminder of a time before mass farming when salmon was ‘the fish of the rich.’”<sup>32</sup>

6 38. Accordingly, salmon farmers admit that if they did not include the color  
7 additive in their products, consumers will not purchase the products at all.<sup>33</sup> Color is  
8 so important to consumers that they “will pay up to \$1 per pound more for darker  
9 colored salmon compared to salmon with lighter hues[.]”<sup>34</sup>

10 39. However, once “consumers know that color has been added to farmed  
11 salmon, they are less willing to pay for the darkest fish[.]”<sup>35</sup> For this reason, salmon  
12 farmers like Defendant, seek to hide the use of color additives in their Products.

13 40. To prevent this fraud, Federal and California law requires that color  
14 additives be noted on salmon products to ensure that consumers are *actually* buying  
15 what they believe they are buying.

16 **C. Defendant Adds Color Additives to the Product**

17 41. Defendant manufactures, distributes, advertises, and sells the Product,  
18 Salmon Fillet in brine and juice. The Product is sold online and in brick-and-mortar  
19 stores. The Product is made from Atlantic Salmon, a species of salmon that, as  
20 explained above, must be farmed.

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25 <sup>32</sup> *Id.*

26 <sup>33</sup> *Id.*

27 <sup>34</sup> *Id.*

28 <sup>35</sup> *Id.*



**Figure 2: Product Image**

42. Salmon, like flamingos, get their signature pink color from the food they eat. In the wild, salmon consume carotenoids from microalgae, phytoplankton, and small fish that, in turn, make the salmon pink.<sup>36</sup>

43. But farm raised salmon—which live on a diet of pellets and antibiotics—do not consume beta carotenes. Thus, farmed raised salmon flesh is grey or white rather than pink.<sup>37</sup>

44. Defendant's Product is farm-raised in net-pens in Norway and Chile. As such, the only way that the fish in Defendant's Product would contain color additives would be if Defendant intentionally added it to the salmon's feed.

45. Independent testing conducted by Plaintiffs' counsel has confirmed the presence of astaxanthin in the Product.

<sup>36</sup> Barcott, *supra* note 13.

<sup>37</sup> Gajanan, *supra* note 5.



46. The only reason farm raised salmon would contain astaxanthin is if it was being added to the salmon’s feed for the purpose of changing the color of the fishes’ flesh.

47. Because consumers have grown to understand the health benefits of salmon and their preference for brighter pink coloring, fish farmers add pigmentation to the salmon feed. This coloring is called astaxanthin or canthaxanthin.<sup>38</sup>

48. Fish farmers use a “SalmoFan”—like an artist’s color wheel—that help determine how much astaxanthin or castaxanthin a farmer needs to add to the fish feed to achieve the desired color.



**Figure 3: SalmoFan**

49. But neither chemical comes without a risk to consumers. For example, canthaxanthin is banned in the United Kingdom<sup>39</sup> as an additive because it can deposit yellow particles in human retinas and impair vision.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> *Id.*

<sup>39</sup> *Id.*

<sup>40</sup> Stuart Millar, *How the King of Fish is Being Farmed to Death*, THE OBSERVER (Jan. 6, 2001),

1           50. Indeed, Canthaxanthin was the more popular color additive until the  
2 early 2000s when salmon farmers were encouraged to switch to the more expensive  
3 astaxanthin.

4           51. Under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Act, 21 U.S.C. § 343, a  
5 salmonid product is misbranded when the product packaging fails to inform  
6 consumers of the presence of the artificial coloring astaxanthin. Specifically, the  
7 implementing regulations require that “[t]he presence of the color additive in  
8 salmonid fish that have been fed feeds containing astaxanthin shall be declared in  
9 accordance with §§ 101.22(k)(2) ... of this chapter.” 21 C.F.R. § 73.35(d)(3).

10           52. The labeling requirement may be satisfied with statements on the  
11 packaging like “‘Artificial Color,’ ‘Artificial Color Added,’ or ‘Color Added’ (or by  
12 an equally informative term that makes clear that a color additive has been used in  
13 the food).” 21 C.F.R. § 101.22(k)(2).

14           53. Laws enacted by most states, including California, also require this  
15 disclosure. California Health and Safety Code declares that “[a]ny food is  
16 misbranded if it bears or contains any artificial flavoring, artificial coloring, or  
17 chemical preservative, unless its labeling states that fact.” Cal. Health & Safety §  
18 110740. Moreover, for salmon specifically the California Health and Safety Code  
19 expressly incorporates the FDA’s labeling requirements. Cal. Health & Safety Code  
20 § 110795. However, as shown above, the front label, which Plaintiffs viewed and  
21 relied on when making their purchases, is entirely devoid of these mandated  
22 disclosures.

23           **D. Defendant Knew or Should Have Known That**  
24           **Consumers Would Be Misled by its Omissions**

25           54. Defendant pursued a nationwide policy to violate federal and state  
26 regulations by concealing that its Product contained (and continues to contain)

27 <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2001/jan/07/fishing.food#:~:text=It%20is%20estimated%20that%20a,a%20town%20of%2020%2C000%20people>.  
28

1 artificial coloring.

2 55. Knowledge of use of artificial coloring, like astaxanthin, is material to  
3 consumers' purchasing decisions.

4 56. Not all farm-raised salmon is bad. Recent development in aquaculture  
5 has introduced new systems that raise the salmon "in closed-containment facilities on  
6 land. The fish swim in tanks filled with filtered, recirculated water and the salmon  
7 never touch the ocean, eliminating the use of chemicals and damage to the  
8 environment."<sup>41</sup>

9 57. The way consumers usually understand these differences comes down  
10 primarily to consumer perception of the color of the salmon.

11 58. Astaxanthin is very expensive, accounting for 20% of the cost of the  
12 feed for farmed salmon.<sup>42</sup> But because color is so important to consumers and  
13 results in an increase in consumer purchase price salmon farmers find that adding  
14 color additives to the feed is worthwhile.<sup>43</sup>

15 59. As such, the addition of artificial color to farm-raised salmon increases  
16 the marketability of farm-raised salmon and inflates the price of the Product.

17 60. However, Defendant did not disclose its use of astaxanthin in its  
18 Product. Therefore, Defendant's concealment of artificial coloring in its salmon  
19 misled consumers, including Plaintiffs and Members of the proposed Classes, into  
20

21 <sup>41</sup> Frantz et al., *supra* note **Error! Bookmark not defined.**; *see also* Clark, *supra*  
22 note 18 ("Now, several land-based farms across the country are beginning to offer a  
23 more climate-stable alternative to traditional salmon aquaculture — one that's  
24 cleaner, more ecologically responsible and potentially has a lower carbon  
footprint.").

25 <sup>42</sup> *Id.*

26 <sup>43</sup> Donna Byrne, *Disclosing the Potentially Dangerous Dyes that Make Gray Salmon*  
27 *Pink: The California Supreme Court Holds that Actions to Enforce the State's Food*  
28 *Labeling Law Are Not Preempted By Federal Law*, FINDLAW (Feb. 18, 2008),  
[https://supreme.findlaw.com/legal-commentary/disclosing-the-potentially-](https://supreme.findlaw.com/legal-commentary/disclosing-the-potentially-dangerous-dyes-that-make-gray-salmon-pink.html)  
[dangerous-dyes-that-make-gray-salmon-pink.html](https://supreme.findlaw.com/legal-commentary/disclosing-the-potentially-dangerous-dyes-that-make-gray-salmon-pink.html).

believing that the salmon they purchased did not contain color additives and/or was of a higher quality than other farmed salmon products.

61. By concealing the presence of artificial color in its Product and thereby capitalizing on consumers' understanding of the higher quality, wild caught salmon. Defendant's conduct was uniform across all its salmon Products.

62. In line with the F.D.A.'s concern and corresponding labeling requirements, "transparency, better regulation, and accurate labels on farmed salmon are essential to ensure good choices for our health[.]"<sup>44</sup>

63. But unfortunately for consumers, the Product "looks like it came from the same place as its wild relation, with that rich, pink hue. .... Nothing, apart from the bargain-basement price tag, to give away the reality of intensive salmon production, which has turned the King of Fish into the battery chicken of the seas."<sup>45</sup>

64. Given consumers' undisputed reliance on salmon color in their purchasing decision, their preference for health-benefit-supporting salmon, and their concerns about farmed fish and artificial coloring agents, consumers like Plaintiffs were injured by Defendant's failure to comply with its labeling requirements.

65. By concealing the artificial coloring of their Product, Defendant has become unjustly enriched because consumers have been (and continue to be) misled into purchasing the Product in that they would not have done so or would have done so on substantially different terms.

66. Although Defendant is in the best and exclusive position to know the true composition and contents of its Product, Plaintiffs satisfy the requirements of Rule 9(b) by alleging the following facts with particularity:

67. **WHO:** Defendant MW Polar Corporation.

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<sup>44</sup> *Id.*

<sup>45</sup> Millar, *supra* note 40.

1           68. **WHAT:** Defendant's conduct here was, and continues to be, fraudulent  
2 because it had a duty to disclose that its Product contains a color additive but failed  
3 to do so on the Product packaging. The inclusion of color additives in salmon  
4 products is known to be material to consumers' purchasing decisions by giving the  
5 impression that the Product is comprised of wild caught salmon which consumers  
6 prefer. Defendant knew, or reasonably should have known, that this information is  
7 material to reasonable consumers, including Plaintiff and the members of the Classes  
8 when they make their purchasing decisions, yet Defendant continued to pervasively  
9 and affirmatively warrant and represent that the Product is of a quality and character  
10 that it is not.

11           69. Indeed, by concealing the presence of artificial color in its Product, and  
12 thereby imitating wild salmon, Defendant unfairly and deceptively disassociate the  
13 Product from the real defects of farm-raised salmon including the following:

- 14                   (a) The potential health risks of eating farmed salmon;
- 15                   (b) The vast amount of antibiotics, pesticides, and antiparasitics fed  
16                   to farm-raised salmon;
- 17                   (c) The higher levels of chemicals and other dangerous contaminants  
18                   found in farm-raised salmon;
- 19                   (d) The higher saturated fat content of farm-raised salmon;
- 20                   (e) The lower beneficial nutrient and omega-3 fatty acid content in  
21                   farm-raised salmon;
- 22                   (f) The significant source of pollution farm-raised salmon are in the  
23                   marine environment;
- 24                   (g) The threat farm-raised salmon pose to wild salmon runs; and
- 25                   (h) The controversy around the health risks associated with the  
26                   artificial coloring agents.

27           70. **WHEN:** Defendant made material misrepresentations and omissions  
28 during the putative class period, including prior to and at the time of Plaintiffs' and



1 the Members of the Classes purchases, despite Defendant knowing—or reasonably  
2 should have known—that the Product contained astaxanthin. Plaintiffs viewed the  
3 packaging and advertising of the Product at the time of purchase and viewed the  
4 representations and warranties made by Defendant on the packaging and  
5 corresponding marketing, understanding them to mean that the Product was of a  
6 higher, fresher, naturally caught composition than farm raised.

7 71. **WHERE:** Defendant’s marketing messages were uniform and  
8 pervasive throughout California, New York, and the United States, carried through  
9 material misrepresentations, warranties, and omissions on its labeling, packaging,  
10 and marketing materials.

11 72. **HOW:** Defendant made material misrepresentations and omissions of  
12 fact regarding the Product by representing and warranting that the Product did not  
13 include color additives and therefore was of a higher quality than it is.

14 73. **WHY IT IS FALSE:** Defendant made material representations and  
15 warranties that the Product did not include color additives. These representations  
16 and warranties communicate to reasonable consumers that the Product is of a  
17 “premium quality” comparable to, if not the same as, quality consumers reasonably  
18 have come to expect from wild caught salmon. However, and although consumers  
19 like Plaintiffs purchased the Product for the purpose of purchasing salmon that was  
20 free of synthetic color additives, the Product actually contains astaxanthin..

21 74. **INJURY:** Plaintiffs and the members of the Classes purchased, and  
22 paid a premium, or otherwise paid more for the Product they otherwise would not  
23 have—had they known that the Product contained color additives and so was of a  
24 lessor farm-raised quality than a wild-caught quality fish.

### 25 **CLASS ALLEGATIONS**

26 75. ***Nationwide Class.*** Plaintiffs bring this nationwide class action pursuant  
27 to Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, individually and on behalf of a  
28 class defined as:

1 All persons in the United States who purchased the Product during the  
2 statute of limitations period.

3 76. **California Subclass.** Plaintiff Beal brings this California Subclass  
4 action pursuant to Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, individually and  
5 on behalf of the subclass defined as:

6 All persons in the State of California who purchased the Product during  
7 the statute of limitations period.

8 77. **New York Subclass.** Plaintiff Whetstone brings this New York  
9 Subclass action pursuant to Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure,  
10 individually and on behalf of the subclass defined as:

11 All persons in the State of New York who purchased the Product during  
12 the statute of limitations period.

13 78. Unless otherwise specified, the “Class” shall refer to the Nationwide  
14 Class. The Classes collectively shall be referred to as the “Classes.”

15 79. Excluded from the Classes are: (1) persons who made such purchases  
16 for the purpose of resale; (2) any Judge or Magistrate presiding over this action and  
17 any members of their families; (3) Defendant, Defendant’s subsidiaries, parents,  
18 successors, predecessors, and any entity in which Defendant or its parent has a  
19 controlling interest and their current or former employees, officers, and directors;  
20 and (4) Plaintiffs’ counsel and Defendant’s counsel.

21 80. **Numerosity.** At this time, Plaintiffs do not know the exact number of  
22 members of the aforementioned Class and Subclasses (“Class Members” or  
23 “Subclass Members”). However, given the nature of the claims, Plaintiffs believe  
24 that Class and Subclass Members are so numerous that joinder of all members is  
25 impracticable.

26 81. There is a well-defined community of interest in the questions of law  
27 and facts involved in this case. Questions of law and fact common to members of  
28

1 the Class and Subclasses that predominate over questions that may affect individual  
2 Class Members include:

- 3 (a) Whether the Product contained astaxanthin;
- 4 (b) Whether a reasonable consumer would understand Defendant's  
5 marketing and packaging to understanding that the Product would  
6 be free color additives like astaxanthin;
- 7 (c) Whether Defendant misrepresented and/or failed to disclose  
8 material facts concerning the Product;
- 9 (d) Whether Defendant had a duty to disclose the presence of  
10 astaxanthin in its Product;
- 11 (e) Whether Defendant's conduct was unlawful;
- 12 (f) Whether the salmon was farm raised or wild caught;
- 13 (g) Whether Defendant has been unjustly enriched as a result of the  
14 unlawful conduct alleged in this Complaint such that it would be  
15 inequitable for Defendant to retain the benefits conferred upon it  
16 by Plaintiffs and the Class and Subclasses;
- 17 (h) Whether Plaintiffs, the Class, and Subclasses sustained damages  
18 with respect to common law claims asserted, and if so, the proper  
19 measure of those damages.

20 82. With respect to the California Subclass, additional questions of law and  
21 fact common to the members include whether Defendant violated California Civil  
22 Code § 1750, *et seq.*, California's Consumers Legal Remedies Act ("CLRA");  
23 California's Unfair Competition Law, California Business & Professions Code §  
24 17200, *et seq.* ("UCL"); and California's False Advertising Law, California Business  
& Professions Code § 17500, *et seq.* ("FAL").

25 83. With respect to the New York Subclass, additional questions of law and  
26 fact common to the members include whether Defendants violated New York Gen.  
27 Bus. Law § 349 and New York Gen. Bus. Law § 350.

1           84. **Typicality.** The claims of the named Plaintiffs are typical of the claims  
2 of the Classes because the named Plaintiffs, like other members of the Class and  
3 Subclasses, purchased the Product relying on the representations and warranties  
4 made by Defendants on the Product's packaging that the Products did not include  
5 color additives.

6           85. **Adequate Representation.** Plaintiffs are adequate representatives of the  
7 Class and Subclasses because their interests do not conflict with the interests of the  
8 Class Members they seek to represent, they have retained competent counsel  
9 experienced in prosecuting class actions, and they intend to prosecute this action  
10 vigorously. The interests of the Class Members will be fairly and adequately  
11 protected by Plaintiffs and their counsel.

12           86. **Superiority.** The class mechanism is superior to other available means  
13 for the fair and efficient adjudication of the claims of the members of the Class and  
14 Subclasses. Each individual Class Member may lack the resources to undergo the  
15 burden and expense of individual prosecution of the complex and extensive litigation  
16 necessary to establish Defendant's liability. Individualized litigation increases the  
17 delay and expense to all parties and multiplies the burden on the judicial system  
18 presented by the complex legal and factual issues of this case. Individualized  
19 litigation also presents a potential for inconsistent or contradictory judgments. In  
20 contrast, the class action device presents far fewer management difficulties and  
21 provides the benefits of single adjudication, economy of scale, and comprehensive  
22 supervision by a single court on the issue of Defendant's liability. Class treatment of  
23 the liability issues will ensure that all claims and claimants are before this Court for  
24 consistent adjudication of liability issues.

**COUNT I**

**Violation of California’s Consumers Legal Remedies Act (“CLRA”)  
California Civil Code § 1750, *et seq.*  
(On Behalf of Plaintiffs, the Nationwide Class, and California Subclass)**

87. Plaintiffs incorporate the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.

88. Plaintiffs bring this claim individually and on behalf of themselves, the Nationwide Class, and California Subclass against Defendant.

89. Civil Code § 1770(a)(5) prohibits “[r]epresenting that goods ... have sponsorship, approval, characteristics, ingredients, uses, benefits, or quantities which they do not have...”

90. Civil Code § 1770(a)(7) prohibits “[r]epresenting that goods or services are of a particular standard, quality, or grade, or that the goods are of a particular style or model, if they are of another.”

91. Civil Code § 1770(a)(9) prohibits “advertising goods ... with the intent not to sell them as advertised.”

92. Defendant violated Civil Code §§ 1770(a)(5), (a)(7), and (a)(9) by holding out the Product as not containing color additives when it contained astaxanthin, a color additive.

93. Defendant had exclusive knowledge and/or superior knowledge of the contents of the Product as it was responsible for maintaining its farms and feeding its fish, which was not known to Plaintiffs or the Classes.

94. Defendant made material misrepresentations about the Product to Plaintiffs and the Members of the Classes while suppressing the true nature of the Product. Specifically, by warranting that the Product was of a “premium quality,” with an image of a bright pink salmon filet akin to natural pink coloring consumers like Plaintiffs associate with wild caught salmon, and failing to disclose that it contained color additives when the Product actually contained astaxanthin, Defendant affirmatively and materially misrepresented the Product as being of a



1 higher quality consumers attach to wild caught salmon when, instead, the Product is  
2 farm-raised and colored through synthetic, non-natural alternatives.

3 95. Plaintiffs and the Classes have suffered harm as a result of these  
4 violations of the CLRA because they have incurred charges and/or paid monies for  
5 the Product that they otherwise would not have incurred or paid.

6 96. On April 2, 2025., prior to the filing of this complaint, Plaintiffs'  
7 counsel sent Defendant a CLRA notice letter, which complies in all material respects  
8 with California Civil Code § 1782(a). The letter advised Defendant that it was in  
9 violation of the CLRA with respect to the presence of astaxanthin in the Product and  
10 demanded that Defendant cease and desist from such violations and make full  
11 restitution by refunding the monies received therefrom to consumers. The letter  
12 stated that it was sent on behalf of all other similarly situated purchasers.

13 97. Defendant failed to remedy the issues raised by the notice letter.

14 98. Pursuant to Civ. Code § 1780, Plaintiffs and the Classes seek: (a) actual  
15 damages in an amount to be determined at trial; (b) an order enjoining Defendant  
16 from continuing its violative acts and practices; (c) restitution of all money and  
17 property lost by Plaintiffs and Members of the Classes as a result of Defendant's  
18 unlawful conduct; (d) punitive damages; (e) any other relief that the Court deems  
19 proper; and (f) attorneys' costs and fees.

20 **COUNT II**

21 **Violation of California's Unfair Competition Law ("UCL")**  
22 **California Civil Code § 17200, *et seq.***

23 **(On Behalf of Plaintiffs, the Nationwide Class and California Subclass)**

24 99. Plaintiffs incorporate the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth  
25 herein.

26 100. Plaintiffs bring this claim individually and on behalf of the Nationwide  
27 and California Subclass against Defendant.  
28

1 101. California Business and Professions Code § 17200 prohibits “any  
2 unlawful, unfair, or fraudulent business act or practice.” For the reasons discussed  
3 above, Defendant has engaged in unlawful, unfair, and fraudulent business acts or  
4 practices in violation of California Business & Professions Code § 17200.

5 102. Defendant has violated the UCL’s proscription against engaging in  
6 **Unlawful Business Practices** by misbranding its Product pursuant to 21 U.S.C. §  
7 343, by violating FDA’s labeling requirements for salmon under 21 C.F.R. 101. §  
8 101.22(k)(2).

9 103. Additionally, Defendant also engaged in unlawful business practices by  
10 misbranding its Product under California law, Cal. Health & Safety Code §§ 110740  
11 and 110795, by failing to follow FDA’s labeling requirements for salmonid fish.

12 104. Finally, Defendant engaged in unlawful business practices by violating  
13 CLRA, Cal. Civ. Code §§ 1770(a)(5), (a)(7), and (a)(9); California’s False  
14 Advertising Law (“FAL”), Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17500, *et seq.*; and New York  
15 Gen. Bus. Law §§ 349 and 350.

16 105. In addition, as described more fully above, Defendant’s misleading  
17 marketing, advertising, packaging, and labeling of its Product is likely to deceive  
18 reasonable consumers. In addition, Defendants have committed unlawful business  
19 practices by, *inter alia*, making the presentation and omission of material facts, as set  
20 forth more fully above, thereby violating the common law.

21 106. Defendant also violated the UCL’s prohibition against engaging in  
22 **Unfair Business Practices**. Defendant’s acts, omissions, misrepresentations,  
23 practices, and non-disclosures as alleged herein also constitutes “unfair” business  
24 acts and practices within the meaning of Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200, *et seq.*, as the  
25 conduct is substantially injurious to consumers, offends public policy, and is  
26 immoral, unethical, oppressive, and unscrupulous as the gravity of the conduct  
27 outweighs any alleged benefits attributable to such conduct.  
28

1           107. There were reasonably available alternatives to further Defendant's  
2 legitimate business interest, other than the conduct described above.

3           108. Defendant has further violated the UCL's proscription against engaging  
4 in **Fraudulent Business Practices**. Defendant's claims, nondisclosures, and  
5 misleading statements with respect to the Product, are more fully set forth above,  
6 were false, misleading, and/or likely to deceive the consuming public within the  
7 meaning of Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200.

8           109. Plaintiffs and the Members of the Classes suffered a substantial injury  
9 by virtue of buying the Product that they would not have purchased absent  
10 Defendant's unlawful, fraudulent, and unfair marketing, advertising, packaging, and  
11 omission about the inclusion of astaxanthin in the Product.

12           110. There is no benefit to consumers or competition from deceptively  
13 marketing and omitting material facts about the true nature of the Product.

14           111. Plaintiffs and the Members of the Classes had no way of reasonably  
15 knowing that the Product they purchased was not marketed, advertised, packaged, or  
16 labeled in conformity with Defendant's representations. Thus, they could not have  
17 reasonably avoided the injury each of them suffered.

18           112. The gravity of the consequences of Defendant's conduct, as described  
19 above, outweighs any justification, motive, or reason therefore, particularly  
20 considering the available legal alternatives which exist in the marketplace. Such  
21 conduct is immoral, unethical, unscrupulous, offends established public policy, or is  
22 substantially injurious to Plaintiff Beal and the other Members of the Classes.

23           113. Pursuant to Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17203, Plaintiffs and the Classes  
24 seek an order of this Court that includes, but is not limited to, requiring Defendant to  
25 (a) provide restitution to Plaintiffs and the other Class Members; (b) disgorge all  
26 revenues obtained as a result of violations of the UCL; and (c) pay Plaintiffs'  
27 attorneys' fees and costs.

**COUNT III**

**Violation of California’s False Advertising Law (“FAL”)  
California Business & Professions Code § 17500, *et seq.*  
(On Behalf of Plaintiffs, the Nationwide Class, and California Subclass)**

114. Plaintiffs incorporate the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.

115. Plaintiffs bring this claim individually and on behalf of themselves, the Nationwide Class, and California Subclass against Defendant.

116. Defendant’s acts and practices, as described herein, have deceived and are likely to continue to deceive members of the Nationwide and California Subclass and the public. As described throughout this complaint, Defendant misrepresented the Product as not containing color additives and representing to reasonable consumers that the Product is of a “premium quality” comparable to, if not the same as, wild-caught salmon quality. However, the Product is not as it gets its pink coloring from astaxanthin, a synthetic color additive.

117. By its actions, Defendant disseminated uniform advertising regarding the Product to and across California and the United States. The advertising was, by its very nature, unfair, deceptive, untrue, and misleading within the meaning of Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17500, *et seq.* Such advertisements were intended to and likely did deceive the consuming public.

118. The above-described false, misleading, and deceptive advertising Defendant disseminated continues to have a likelihood to deceive in that Defendant failed to disclose that the Product contains color additives.

119. Defendant continues to misrepresent to consumers that the Product is of “premium quality” akin to wild caught salmon and does not contain color additives when, in fact, the Product contains astaxanthin.

120. In making and disseminating these statements, Defendant knew, or should have known, its advertisements were untrue and misleading in violation of

1 California law. Plaintiffs and the Members of the Classes based their purchasing  
2 decisions on Defendant's omitted material facts. The revenue attributable to the  
3 Product sold in those false and misleading advertisements likely amounts to millions  
4 of dollars. Plaintiffs and the Members of the Classes were injured in fact and lost  
5 money and property as a result.

6 121. The misrepresentation and non-disclosures by Defendant and the  
7 material facts described and detailed herein constitute false and misleading  
8 advertising and, therefore, constitute a violation of Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17500,  
9 *et seq.*

10 122. As a result of Defendant's wrongful conduct, Plaintiffs and the  
11 Members of the Classes lost money in an amount to be proven at trial. Plaintiffs and  
12 the Members of the Classes are therefore entitled to restitution as appropriate for this  
13 cause of action.

14 123. Plaintiffs and the Classes therefore seek (a) all monetary and non-  
15 monetary restitution allowed by law, including restitution of all profits stemming  
16 from Defendant's unfair, unlawful, and fraudulent business practices; (b) declaratory  
17 relief; (c) reasonable attorneys' fees and costs under California Code Civ. Proc.  
18 1021.5; (d) injunctive relief, and other appropriate equitable relief.

19 **COUNT IV**  
20 **Violation of New York General Business Law § 349**  
21 **(On Behalf of Plaintiff Whetstone and the New York Subclass)**

22 124. Plaintiff Whetstone incorporates the forgoing allegations as if fully set  
23 forth herein.

24 125. The acts of Defendant, as described above, constitute unlawful,  
25 deceptive, and fraudulent business acts and practice.

26 126. Defendant markets the Product as being of a "premium quality" akin to  
27 quality reasonably expected of wild caught salmon, and not containing color  
28 additives, when testing demonstrates that the Product actually contains astaxanthin.



1           127. Defendant thus has violated, and continues to violate, § 349 of the New  
2       York General Business Law (“NYGBL”), which makes deceptive acts and practices  
3       unlawful. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant’s violations of § 349,  
4       Plaintiff Whetstone and other members of the New York Subclass have suffered  
5       damages in an amount to be determined at trial.

6           128. Defendant’s improper consumer-oriented conduct is misleading in a  
7       material way in that it, *inter alia*, induced Plaintiff Whetstone and the New York  
8       Subclass members to purchase and pay the requested price for the Product when they  
9       otherwise would not have, or would not have, purchased as much.

10          129. Defendant made the untrue and/or misleading statements and  
11       representations willfully, wantonly, and with reckless disregard for the truth.

12          130. Plaintiff Whetstone and the New York Subclass members have been  
13       injured by their purchase of the Product, which was worth less than what they  
14       bargained and/or paid for, and which they selected over other products that may have  
15       been truthfully marketed.

16          131. Defendant’s advertising induced Plaintiff Whetstone and the New York  
17       Subclass members to buy the Product, to buy more of it, and/or to pay the price  
18       requested.

19          132. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant’s violations of § 349,  
20       Plaintiff Whetstone and the other members of the New York Subclass paid for a  
21       falsely advertised Product and, as such, have suffered damages in an amount to be  
22       determined at trial.

23          133. By reason of the foregoing, Plaintiff Whetstone and the New York  
24       Subclass members are entitled to (1) actual damages and/or statutory damages; (2)  
25       punitive damages; and (3) reasonable attorneys’ fees, pursuant to NYGBL § 349(h).  
26  
27  
28

**COUNT V**

**Violation of New York General Business Law § 350  
(On Behalf of Plaintiff Whetstone and the New York Subclass)**

134. Plaintiff Whetstone hereby incorporates the foregoing allegations as if fully stated herein.

135. Each of the acts of Defendant, as described above, constitute unlawful, deceptive, and fraudulent business acts and practices.

136. New York General Business Law § 350 declares unlawful any “[f]alse advertising in the conduct of any business, trade or commerce or in the furnishing of any service in this state[.]”

137. NYGBL § 350-a defines “false advertising” in relevant part, as “advertising, including labeling, of a commodity ... if such advertising is misleading in a material respect.”

138. Plaintiff Whetstone and the members of the New York Subclass are consumers who purchased Defendant’s Product in New York.

139. As a seller of goods to the consuming public, Defendant is engaged in the conduct of business, trade, or commerce, within the intended ambit of § 350.

140. Defendant’s representations (made by statement, word, design, device, sound, or any combination thereof), and also the extent to which Defendant’s advertising has failed to reveal material facts with respect to its Product, as described above, have constituted false advertising in violation of § 350.

141. Defendant knew, or reasonably should know, that its advertising of the Product is false. Defendant is the manufacturer, marketer, and seller of the Product and thereby is privy to the production, marketing, labeling, and production processes that create and put the Product into commerce. Defendant was in the best position to know of, and test for, the quality and safety of the Product but nonetheless chose to continue its course of marketing regardless.

1 142. Defendant's actions led to direct, foreseeable, and proximate injury to  
2 Plaintiff Whetstone and the members of the New York Subclass.

3 143. As a consequence of Defendant's deceptive marketing scheme, Plaintiff  
4 Whetstone and the other members of the New York Subclass suffered an  
5 ascertainable loss, insofar as they would not have purchased the Product had the  
6 truth been known, would not have paid the requested price of the Product and/or  
7 would have purchased less of the Product; moreover, as a result of Defendant's  
8 conduct, Plaintiff Whetstone and the other members of the New York Subclass  
9 received the Product at a lesser value than what they paid for.

10 144. By reason of the foregoing, Plaintiff Whetstone and the New York  
11 Subclass members are entitled to (1) actual damages and/or statutory damages; (2)  
12 punitive damages; and (3) reasonable attorneys' fees, pursuant to NYGBL § 350-  
13 e(3).

14 **COUNT VI**  
15 **Unjust Enrichment**  
16 **(On Behalf of Plaintiffs and the Nationwide Class)**

17 145. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate the foregoing allegations as if fully set  
18 forth herein.

19 146. Plaintiffs bring this claim individually and on behalf of the Nationwide  
20 Class under the laws of California.

21 147. To the extent required by the law, this cause of action is alleged in the  
22 alternative to legal claims, as permitted under Fed. R. Civ. P. 8.

23 148. Plaintiffs and the Nationwide Class conferred benefits on Defendant by  
24 purchasing the Product.

25 149. Defendant was unjustly enriched in retaining the revenues derived from  
26 Plaintiffs and the members of the Nationwide Class. Retention of those monies  
27 under these circumstances is unjust and inequitable because Defendant failed to  
28 disclose that the Product contained color additives, rendering its representations that

1 the Product is of a “premium quality” false and misleading as consumers like  
2 Plaintiffs reasonably understood that the Product was of a wild caught quality instead  
3 of the lessor farm raised quality. These omissions caused injuries to Plaintiffs and  
4 the members of the Nationwide Class because they would not have purchased the  
5 Product if the facts were known.

6 150. Because Defendant’s retention of the non-gratuitous benefits conferred  
7 on them by Plaintiffs and the members of the Nationwide Class is unjust and  
8 inequitable, Defendant has been unjustly enriched in an amount to be determined at  
9 trial.

10 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

11 WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs, individually and on behalf of all others similarly  
12 situated, seek judgement against Defendant as follows:

- 13 (a) For an order certifying the Classes under Fed. R. Civ. P. 23 and  
14 naming Plaintiffs as representatives of the Classes, and Plaintiffs’  
attorneys as Class Counsel;
- 15 (b) For an order declaring that the Defendant’s conduct violates the  
16 statutes referenced herein;
- 17 (c) For an order finding in favor of Plaintiffs and the Classes on all  
counts asserted herein;
- 18 (d) For compensatory, statutory, and punitive damages in the  
19 amounts to be determined by the Court and/or jury;
- 20 (e) For prejudgment interest on all amounts awarded;
- 21 (f) For an order of restitution and all other forms of equitable  
22 monetary relief;
- 23 (g) For injunctive relief as pleaded or as the Court may deem proper;
- 24 (h) For an order awarding Plaintiffs and the Classes their reasonable  
25 attorneys’ fees and expenses and costs of suit.

26 **JURY TRIAL DEMANDED**

27 Plaintiffs demand a trial by jury on all claims so triable.  
28

1 Dated: May 28, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

2 **BURSOR & FISHER, P.A.**

3 By: /s/ L. Timothy Fisher  
4 L. Timothy Fisher

5 L. Timothy Fisher (State Bar No. 191626)  
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17 *Attorneys for Plaintiffs*

**CLRA VENUE DECLARATION**

I, L. Timothy Fisher, declare as follows:

1. I am an attorney at law licensed to practice in the State of California and a member of the bar of this Court. I am a partner at Bursor & Fisher, P.A., counsel of record for Plaintiff. Plaintiff Beal resides in Escondido, California. I have personal knowledge of the facts set forth in this declaration and, if called as a witness, I could and would competently testify thereto under oath.

2. The Complaint filed in this action is filed in the proper venue for trial under Civil Code Section 1780(d) in that a substantial portion of the events alleged in the Complaint occurred in the Southern District of California, as Plaintiff Beal resides in this District and purchased the Product from a store in this District. Additionally, Defendant advertises, markets, manufacturers, sells, and distributes the Product at issue to Class Members in this District.

3. I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California and the United States that the foregoing is true and correct, and that this declaration was executed at Walnut Creek, California this, May 28, 2025.

/s/ L. Timothy Fisher  
L. Timothy Fisher



CIVIL COVER SHEET  
of 1

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

**I. (a) PLAINTIFFS**

BEVERLY BEAL and COURTNEY WHETSTONE, on  
behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated,

(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff San Diego  
(EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)

(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)  
L. Timothy Fisher, Bursor & Fisher, P.A.  
1990 N. California Blvd., 9th Floor  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

**DEFENDANTS**

MW POLAR FOODS CORPORATION,

County of Residence of First Listed Defendant \_\_\_\_\_  
(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)

NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF  
THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.

Attorneys (If Known)

**'25CV1358 WQHJLB**

**II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION** (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- ☐ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff ☐ 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)
- ☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant ☒ 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)

**III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES** (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)

- |   | PTF                                   | DEF                        |   | PTF                        | DEF                                   |
|---|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Citizen of This State                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Incorporated or Principal Place of Business In This State     | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Citizen of Another State                | <input type="checkbox"/> 2            | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Incorporated and Principal Place of Business In Another State | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5            |
| Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country | <input type="checkbox"/> 3            | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Foreign Nation  | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6            |

**IV. NATURE OF SUIT** (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

Click here for: [Nature of Suit Code Descriptions.](#)

CONTRACT	TORTS	FORFEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES
<input type="checkbox"/> 110 Insurance <input type="checkbox"/> 120 Marine <input type="checkbox"/> 130 Miller Act <input type="checkbox"/> 140 Negotiable Instrument <input type="checkbox"/> 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment <input type="checkbox"/> 151 Medicare Act <input type="checkbox"/> 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) <input type="checkbox"/> 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits <input type="checkbox"/> 160 Stockholders' Suits <input type="checkbox"/> 190 Other Contract <input type="checkbox"/> 195 Contract Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 196 Franchise	<b>PERSONAL INJURY</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 310 Airplane <input type="checkbox"/> 315 Airplane Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 320 Assault, Libel & Slander <input type="checkbox"/> 330 Federal Employers' Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 340 Marine <input type="checkbox"/> 345 Marine Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 350 Motor Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 360 Other Personal Injury <input type="checkbox"/> 362 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice <b>PERSONAL INJURY</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 367 Health Care/Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability <b>PERSONAL PROPERTY</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 370 Other Fraud <input type="checkbox"/> 371 Truth in Lending <input type="checkbox"/> 380 Other Personal Property Damage <input type="checkbox"/> 385 Property Damage Product Liability	<input type="checkbox"/> 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 <input type="checkbox"/> 690 Other <b>LABOR</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 710 Fair Labor Standards Act <input type="checkbox"/> 720 Labor/Management Relations <input type="checkbox"/> 740 Railway Labor Act <input type="checkbox"/> 751 Family and Medical Leave Act <input type="checkbox"/> 790 Other Labor Litigation <input type="checkbox"/> 791 Employee Retirement Income Security Act <b>IMMIGRATION</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 462 Naturalization Application <input type="checkbox"/> 465 Other Immigration Actions	<input type="checkbox"/> 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 <input type="checkbox"/> 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 <b>INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 820 Copyrights <input type="checkbox"/> 830 Patent <input type="checkbox"/> 835 Patent - Abbreviated New Drug Application <input type="checkbox"/> 840 Trademark <input type="checkbox"/> 880 Defend Trade Secrets Act of 2016 <b>SOCIAL SECURITY</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 861 HIA (1395ff) <input type="checkbox"/> 862 Black Lung (923) <input type="checkbox"/> 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) <input type="checkbox"/> 864 SSID Title XVI <input type="checkbox"/> 865 RSI (405(g)) <b>FEDERAL TAX SUITS</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) <input type="checkbox"/> 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609	<input type="checkbox"/> 375 False Claims Act <input type="checkbox"/> 376 Qui Tam (31 USC 3729(a)) <input type="checkbox"/> 400 State Reapportionment <input type="checkbox"/> 410 Antitrust <input type="checkbox"/> 430 Banks and Banking <input type="checkbox"/> 450 Commerce <input type="checkbox"/> 460 Deportation <input type="checkbox"/> 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations <input type="checkbox"/> 480 Consumer Credit (15 USC 1681 or 1692) <input type="checkbox"/> 485 Telephone Consumer Protection Act <input type="checkbox"/> 490 Cable/Sat TV <input type="checkbox"/> 850 Securities/Commodities/Exchange <input type="checkbox"/> 890 Other Statutory Actions <input type="checkbox"/> 891 Agricultural Acts <input type="checkbox"/> 893 Environmental Matters <input type="checkbox"/> 895 Freedom of Information Act <input type="checkbox"/> 896 Arbitration <input type="checkbox"/> 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision <input type="checkbox"/> 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes
<b>REAL PROPERTY</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 210 Land Condemnation <input type="checkbox"/> 220 Foreclosure <input type="checkbox"/> 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment <input type="checkbox"/> 240 Torts to Land <input type="checkbox"/> 245 Tort Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 290 All Other Real Property	<b>CIVIL RIGHTS</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 440 Other Civil Rights <input type="checkbox"/> 441 Voting <input type="checkbox"/> 442 Employment <input type="checkbox"/> 443 Housing/Accommodations <input type="checkbox"/> 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment <input type="checkbox"/> 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other <input type="checkbox"/> 448 Education <b>PRISONER PETITIONS</b> <b>Habeas Corpus:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 463 Alien Detainee <input type="checkbox"/> 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence <input type="checkbox"/> 530 General <input type="checkbox"/> 535 Death Penalty <b>Other:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 540 Mandamus & Other <input type="checkbox"/> 550 Civil Rights <input type="checkbox"/> 555 Prison Condition <input type="checkbox"/> 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confinement			

**V. ORIGIN** (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- ☒ 1 Original Proceeding ☐ 2 Removed from State Court ☐ 3 Remanded from Appellate Court ☐ 4 Reinstated or Reopened ☐ 5 Transferred from Another District (specify) ☐ 6 Multidistrict Litigation - Transfer ☐ 8 Multidistrict Litigation - Direct File

**VI. CAUSE OF ACTION**

Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity):  
28 U.S.C. § 1332(d)

Brief description of cause:  
Defendant fraudulently advertises their products.

**VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:**

☒ CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P. **DEMAND \$** 5,000,000.00+ **CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:**  
**JURY DEMAND:** ☒ Yes ☐ No

**VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY**

(See instructions):

JUDGE \_\_\_\_\_ DOCKET NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

DATE

SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

May 28, 2025

/s/ L. Timothy Fisher

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

RECEIPT # \_\_\_\_\_ AMOUNT \_\_\_\_\_ APPLYING IFP \_\_\_\_\_ JUDGE \_\_\_\_\_ MAG. JUDGE \_\_\_\_\_

# ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: [Class Action Lawsuit Claims MW Polar Foods Salmon Fillets Contain Undisclosed Chemical Color Additive](#)

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