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21 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
22 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
23 OAKLAND DIVISION

24 Caley Keene, individually, and on  
25 behalf of those similarly situated,

26 Plaintiff,

27 v.

28 BEAUMONT PRODUCTS, INC.,

Defendant.

CASE NO.

**CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT**

**Demand for Jury Trial**

1 Plaintiff Caley Keene brings this action on behalf of herself and all others  
2 similarly situated against BEAUMONT PRODUCTS, INC. Plaintiff makes the  
3 following allegations pursuant to the investigation of counsel and based upon  
4 information and belief, except as to the allegations specifically pertaining to herself,  
5 which are based on personal knowledge.  
6

7 **NATURE OF THE ACTION**

8 1. This case arises from Defendant’s deceptive and misleading practices  
9 with respect to its marketing and sale of its soap products (collectively, the “Product”  
10 or “Products”).<sup>1</sup>

11 2. Defendant manufactures, markets, and sells its Products throughout the  
12 United States including the State of California.

13 3. Despite the representations made on the Products’ labels which lead  
14 reasonable consumers to believe that the Products are “natural,” they are not.  
15

16 4. The brand has grown significantly, and this growth was not by accident.  
17 Rather, it developed from specifically targeting the “natural” market with intense  
18 focus.  
19

20 5. Defendant’s marketing efforts stress the purported “natural”  
21 composition of their Products.

22 6. Notably, the principal display panel of all of the Products states  
23 “CLEARLY NATURAL” and “Pure and Natural.”  
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27 <sup>1</sup> At the time of this filing, the following Rael products are included in this definition:  
28 Unscented Glycerin Hand Soap, Tea Tree Glycerin Hand Soap, Vitamin E Glycerin  
Hand Soap, and Aloe Vera Glycerin Hand Soap. This definition is not exhaustive, and  
shall include all of Defendant’s products that are similarly deceptively marketed.



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10 7. The word “Natural” is a representation to a reasonable consumer that  
11 the Product contains only natural ingredients.

12 8. Reasonable consumers, including Plaintiff, interpret “natural” to mean  
13 that the product does not include synthetic ingredients.

14  
15 9. Despite this representation, the Products are not natural because they  
16 include multiple synthetic ingredients.

17 10. Specifically, the Products contain the following synthetic ingredients:  
18 Phenoxyethanol and Ethylhexylglycerin.

19  
20 11. Plaintiff and those similarly situated (“Class Members”) relied on  
21 Defendant’s misrepresentations that the Products are “natural” when purchasing the  
22 Products.

23 12. Reasonable consumers purchased the Products believing, among other  
24 things, that they were accurately represented. Specifically, reasonable consumers  
25 believed that the Products contained accurate label information and representations.  
26 Reasonable consumers would not have purchased the Products if they had known  
27 about the misrepresentations or would have purchased them on different terms.  
28

1 13. Plaintiff brings this action individually and on behalf of those similarly  
2 situated and seeks to represent a Nationwide Class, a Multi-State Consumer Class,  
3 and a California Class. Plaintiff seeks damages, interest thereon, reasonable  
4 attorneys' fees and costs, restitution, other equitable relief, and disgorgement of all  
5 benefits Defendant has enjoyed from its unlawful and/or deceptive business practices,  
6 as detailed herein. In addition, Plaintiff seeks injunctive relief to stop Defendant's  
7 unlawful conduct in the labeling and marketing of the Products.  
8

9 14. Defendant's conduct violated and continues to violate, *inter alia*, the  
10 consumer protection statutes of California. Defendant has been and continues to be  
11 unjustly enriched. Accordingly, Plaintiff brings this action against Defendant on  
12 behalf of herself and Class Members who purchased the Products during the  
13 applicable statute of limitations period (the "Class Period").  
14

### 15 JURISDICTION AND VENUE

16  
17 15. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant. Defendant  
18 purposefully avails itself of the California consumer market and distributes the  
19 Products to many locations within the state, where the Products are purchased by  
20 hundreds of consumers every day.  
21

22 16. This Court has original subject-matter jurisdiction over this proposed  
23 class action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d), which, under the provisions of the Class  
24 Action Fairness Act ("CAFA"), explicitly provides for the original jurisdiction of the  
25 federal courts in any class action in which at least 100 members are in the proposed  
26 Plaintiff's class and the matter in controversy exceeds the sum of \$5,000,000.00,  
27 exclusive of interest and costs. Plaintiff alleges that the total claims of individual  
28

1 members of the proposed Classes (as defined herein) are well in excess of  
2 \$5,000,000.00 in the aggregate, exclusive of interest and costs.

3 17. Venue is proper in this District under 28 U.S.C. § 1391. Plaintiff's  
4 purchases of Defendant's Products, substantial acts in furtherance of the alleged  
5 improper conduct, including the dissemination of false and misleading information  
6 regarding the nature, quality, and/or ingredients of the Products, occurred within this  
7 District and the Defendant conducts business in this District.  
8

9  
10 **DIVISIONAL ASSIGNMENT**

11 18. Pursuant to Civil Local Rule 3-2(c-d), a substantial part of the events  
12 giving rise to the claims arose in Alameda County, and this action should be assigned  
13 to the Oakland Division.  
14

15 **PARTIES**

16 19. Plaintiff Caley Keene is a citizen of California who purchased the  
17 Products during the class period, as described herein. Plaintiff's purchases took place  
18 in California. In addition, the advertising and labeling on the package of the Products  
19 purchased by Plaintiff, including the "natural" representations, is typical of the  
20 advertising and labeling of the Products purchased by members of the Class. Plaintiff  
21 relied on the representation on the packaging that the Products were "natural."  
22

- 23 a. Within the past three years, Plaintiff purchased the Unscented and Aloe  
24 Vera versions of the Product on multiple occasions. These purchases  
25 were made at retailers throughout California. Most recently in August  
26 2021, Plaintiff purchased Defendant's Product from the Berkeley  
27 Natural Grocery store in Berkeley, CA at a price of approximately \$7.00.  
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1           20. Defendant BEAUMONT PRODUCTS, INC. is a Georgia corporation  
2 with its principal place of business in Kennesaw, Georgia.

3           a. Defendant produces, markets and distributes the Products in retail  
4 stores across the United States including stores physically located in the  
5 State of California and this District.  
6

7           21. Plaintiff reserves the right to amend this Complaint to add different or  
8 additional defendants, including without limitation any officer, director, employee,  
9 supplier, or distributor of Defendant who has knowingly and willfully aided, abetted,  
10 or conspired in the false and deceptive conduct alleged herein.

11           22. Whenever reference is made in this Complaint to any representation,  
12 act, omission, or transaction of a defendant, that allegation shall mean that the  
13 defendant did the act, omission, or transaction through its officers, directors,  
14 employees, agents, and/or representatives while they were acting within the actual or  
15 ostensible scope of their authority.  
16

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18  
19   FACTS

20           **A. Consumers Value Representations that a Product is Natural**

21           23. Consumers have become increasingly concerned about the effects of  
22 synthetic and chemical ingredients in food, cleaning products, bath and beauty  
23 products and everyday household products.<sup>2</sup>  
24  
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27           <sup>2</sup> Julianna M. Butler & Christian A. Vossler, *What is an Unregulated and Potentially*  
28           *Misleading Label Worth? The case of “Natural”-Labelled Groceries*, Environmental &  
              Resource Economics, Springer; European Association of Environmental and Resource  
              Economists, vol. 70(2), pages 545-564 (2017).

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1           24.     Companies such as the Defendant have capitalized on consumers'  
2 desires for purportedly "natural products."

3           25.     Indeed, consumers are willing to pay, and have paid, a premium for  
4 products branded "natural" over products that contain synthetic ingredients.

5           26.     In 2015, sales of natural products grew 9.5% to \$180 billion.<sup>3</sup> Reasonable  
6 consumers, including Plaintiff and Class Members, value natural products for  
7 important reasons, including the belief that they are safer and healthier than  
8 alternative products that are not represented as natural.

9           27.     Further, consumers have become increasingly concerned about the  
10 effects of synthetic ingredients in consumer products.<sup>4</sup>

11           28.     Reasonable consumers, including Plaintiff and Class Members, value  
12 natural products for important reasons, including the belief that they are safer and  
13 healthier than alternative products that are not represented as natural.  
14

15           29.     As a result, "natural" products are worth more than products that  
16 contain artificial ingredients, and consumers pay a premium for products labeled  
17 "natural" over products that contain synthetic ingredients.  
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24           <sup>3</sup> *Natural Products Industry Sales up 9.5% to \$180bn Says NBJ*, FOOD  
25 NAVIGATOR, [http://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/Markets/EXPO-WEST-  
26 trendspotting-organics-natural-claims/\(page\)/6](http://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/Markets/EXPO-WEST-trendspotting-organics-natural-claims/(page)/6) ; see also Shoshanna Delventhal,  
27 *Study Shows Surge in Demand for "Natural" Products*, INVESTOPEDIA (February  
28 22, 2017), [http://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/022217/study-shows-surge-  
demand-natural-products.asp](http://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/022217/study-shows-surge-demand-natural-products.asp) (Study by Kline Research indicated that in 2016, the  
personal care market reached 9% growth in the U.S. and 8% in the U.K. The trend-  
driven natural and organic personal care industry is on track to be worth \$25.1  
million by 2025).

<sup>4</sup> Butler and Vossler, *supra* note 2.

1           **B. Plaintiff and Other Reasonable Consumers Understand Natural to**  
2           **Mean that a Product Lacks Artificial Ingredients**

3           30. Plaintiff and Class Members understand “natural” representations to  
4 mean that a product lacks synthetic ingredients.

5           31. This interpretation is consistent with the understanding of a reasonable  
6 consumer.

7           32. The test to determine if a company’s “natural” representation is  
8 deceptive is judged by whether it would deceive or mislead a reasonable person. To  
9 assist in ascertaining what a reasonable consumer believes the term “natural” means,  
10 one can look to regulatory agency guidance.

11           33. Federal agencies have warned companies that they must ensure that  
12 they can substantiate “natural” claims.

13           34. In 2013, the United States Department of Agriculture ("USDA") issued a  
14 Draft Guidance Decision Tree for Classification of Materials as Synthetic or  
15 Nonsynthetic (Natural). In accordance with this decision tree, a substance is  
16 natural—as opposed to synthetic—if: (a) it is manufactured, produced, or extracted  
17 from a natural source (i.e. naturally occurring mineral or biological matter); (b) it has  
18 not undergone a chemical change (i.e. a process whereby a substance is transformed  
19 into one or more other distinct substances) so that it is chemically or structurally  
20 different than how it naturally occurs in the source material; or (c) the chemical  
21 change was created by a naturally occurring biological process such as composting,  
22 fermentation, or enzymatic digestion or by heating or burning biological matter.<sup>5</sup>  
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28 <sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Draft Guidance Decision Tree for Classification of  
Materials as Synthetic or Nonsynthetic, March 26, 2013, *available at*  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20140818174458/http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfi>



1 35. The FTC has warned companies that the use of the term “natural” may  
2 be deceptive:<sup>6</sup>

3 Marketers that are using terms such as natural must ensure that they  
4 can substantiate whatever claims they are conveying to reasonable  
5 consumers. If reasonable consumers could interpret a natural claim as  
6 representing that a product contains no artificial ingredients, then the  
7 marketer must be able to substantiate that fact.

8 36. Likewise, the Food and Drug Administration (“FDA”) warns that any  
9 “natural” labeling on products must be “truthful and not misleading.”<sup>7</sup>

10 37. In April 2016, the FTC settled with four manufacturers and filed a  
11 complaint against a fifth company for representing that its products were “natural”  
12 when they contained Phenoxyethanol and other synthetic ingredients. The  
13 manufacturers agreed to cease marketing the products in question as being  
14 “natural.”<sup>8</sup>

15 38. Surveys and other market research, including expert testimony Plaintiff  
16 intends to introduce, will demonstrate that the term “natural” is misleading to a  
17 reasonable consumer because the reasonable consumer believes that the term  
18 “natural,” when used to describe goods such as the Products, means that the goods  
19 are free of synthetic ingredients. For example, according to a consumer survey,  
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21  
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23 \_\_\_\_\_  
24 [le?dDocName=STELPRDC5103308.](#)

25 <sup>6</sup> 75 Fed. Reg. 63552, 63586 (Oct. 15, 2010).

26 <sup>7</sup> U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Small Business & Homemade Cosmetics: Fact  
27 Sheet, *available at*  
28 [<sup>8</sup> \*Four Companies Agree to Stop Falsely Promoting Their Personal-Care Products as “All Natural” or “100% Natural”; Fifth is Charged in Commission Complaint\*, \(April 2016\), <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/press-releases/2016/04/four-companies-agree-stop-falsely-promoting-their-personal-care> \(last visited Mar. 17, 2021\).](http://www.fda.gov/Cosmetics/ResourcesForYou/Industry/ucm388736.htm#7.</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

1 “[e]ighty-six percent of consumers expect a ‘natural’ label to mean processed foods do  
2 not contain any artificial ingredients.”<sup>9</sup>

3 39. A reasonable consumer’s understanding of the term “natural” comports  
4 with that of federal regulators and common meaning. That is, the reasonable  
5 consumer understands the representation that a product is “natural” to mean that it  
6 does not contain any synthetic ingredients.<sup>10</sup>  
7

8  
9 **C. Defendant Represents that the Products are Natural**

10 40. Defendant capitalizes on consumers’ preferences for natural products by  
11 making representations to consumers on its Products that they are natural.

12  
13 41. The front label of every Product states that the Product is “CLEARLY  
14 NATURAL” and “Pure and Natural.”

15 42. The following image is an example of that representation being  
16 prominently made on one of the Products:  
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25 <sup>9</sup> Urvashi Rangan, Comments of Consumers Union on Proposed Guides for Use of  
26 Environmental Marketing Claims, 16 C.F.R. Part 260, Notice of the Federal Trade  
27 Commission (2010), *available at*  
[https://www.ftc.gov/sites/default/files/documents/public\\_comments/guides-use-environmental-marketing-claims-project-no.p954501-00289%2%A0/00289-57072.pdf](https://www.ftc.gov/sites/default/files/documents/public_comments/guides-use-environmental-marketing-claims-project-no.p954501-00289%2%A0/00289-57072.pdf)  
(also accessible as Comment 58 at  
<http://www.ftc.gov/policy/publiccomments/initiative-353>).

28 <sup>10</sup> Butler and Vossler, *supra* note 2. “The vast majority of respondents stated a belief that ‘natural’ signals no artificial flavors, colors and/or preservatives.” *Id.*

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43. Based on the language that appears on the front of each product, Plaintiff reasonably believed that Products contained only natural ingredients.

44. “Natural” is a representation to a reasonable consumer that the Products contain only natural ingredients.

45. Defendant represents on its Products’ labels that the Products are “natural.”

**D. Defendant’s Representations Are False, Misleading, and Deceptive**

46. Despite representing that the Products are “natural,” the Products contain multiple synthetic ingredients.

1 47. Thus, Defendant's representations that the Products are "natural" is  
 2 false, misleading, and deceptive because the Products contain ingredients that are, as  
 3 set forth and described below, synthetic.<sup>11</sup>

4 a. **Phenoxyethanol** is a synthetic substance associated with depressing  
 5 the central nervous system, vomiting, and diarrhea.<sup>12</sup> This synthetic  
 6 chemical concerned the FDA, and the agency warned consumers against  
 7 using on nursing infants because it "can depress the central nervous  
 8 system" and "may cause vomiting and diarrhea, which can lead to  
 9 dehydration in infants."<sup>13</sup> Concern for the use of this synthetic  
 10 ingredient is not restricted to the United States, and after concerns were  
 11 raised by the European Commission's Scientific Committee on  
 12 Consumer Safety, France prohibited the labeling and marketing of  
 13 products containing Phenoxyethanol for use on children that are three  
 14 years old and younger.<sup>14</sup>

15 b. **Ethylhexylglycerin** is a synthetic derived form of vegetable glycerin.

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 22 <sup>11</sup> Other ingredients in the Products may also be artificial as well. Plaintiff's  
 investigation is ongoing and will seek to amend the Complaint to specify other  
 potential artificial ingredients in the future.

23 <sup>12</sup> 21 C.F.R. §172.515 and *FDA Consumer Update: Contaminated Nipple Cream*, (May  
 24 2008),  
 25 <https://web.archive.org/web/20140712202507/https://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm049301.htm> (last visited Mar. 17, 2021).

26 <sup>13</sup> U.S. Food and Drug Administration, For Consumers, *Contaminated Nipple Cream*,  
 27 <https://web.archive.org/web/20140712202507/https://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm049301.htm> (last visited Mar. 17, 2021).

28 <sup>14</sup> Agence Nationale de Sécurité du Médicament et des Produits de Santé, Decision of  
 13 Mars 2019, *available at*  
[https://www.ansm.sante.fr/content/download/158253/2075101/version/1/file/DPS\\_Phenoxxyethanol-200319.pdf](https://www.ansm.sante.fr/content/download/158253/2075101/version/1/file/DPS_Phenoxxyethanol-200319.pdf).

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1 48. Consumers lack the meaningful ability to test or independently  
2 ascertain or verify whether a product is natural, especially at the point of sale.  
3 Consumers would not know that the Products contain unnatural, synthetic  
4 ingredients, by reading the ingredients label.

5 49. Discovering that the ingredients are not natural and are actually  
6 synthetic requires an investigation beyond that of the skills of the average consumer.  
7 That is why, even though the ingredients listed above are identified on the back of  
8 the Products' packaging in the ingredients listed, the reasonable consumer would not  
9 understand – nor are they expected to understand – that these ingredients are  
10 synthetic.

11 50. Moreover, the reasonable consumer is not expected or required to scour  
12 the ingredients list on the back of the Products in order to confirm or debunk  
13 Defendant's prominent front-of-the-product claims, representations, and warranties  
14 that the Products are "natural."

15 51. Defendant did not disclose that the above listed ingredients are  
16 synthetic ingredients anywhere on the Product. A reasonable consumer understands  
17 Defendant's "natural" claims to mean that the Products are "natural" and do not  
18 contain synthetic ingredients.

19 52. Consumers rely on label representations and information in making  
20 purchasing decisions.

21 53. The marketing of the Products as "natural" in a prominent location on  
22 the labels of all of the Products, throughout the Class Period, evidences Defendant's  
23 awareness that "natural" claims are material to consumers.  
24  
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1 54. Additionally, Defendant is aware that products containing synthetic  
2 ingredients have lower demand and exploit reasonable consumers by projecting that  
3 the Products are “natural” and free of synthetic, bad ingredients.

4 55. Defendant’s deceptive representations are material in that a reasonable  
5 person would attach importance to such information and would be induced to act  
6 upon such information in making purchase decisions.  
7

8 56. Plaintiff and the Class Members reasonably relied to their detriment on  
9 Defendant’s misleading representations and omissions.

10 57. Defendant’s false, misleading, and deceptive misrepresentations and  
11 omissions are likely to continue to deceive and mislead reasonable consumers, as they  
12 have already deceived and misled the Plaintiff and the Class Members.  
13

14 **E. Defendant’s Deceptive Conduct Caused Plaintiff’s and Class**  
15 **Members’ Injuries**

16 58. In making the false, misleading, and deceptive representations and  
17 omissions described herein, Defendant knew and intended that consumers would pay  
18 a premium for Products labeled "natural" over comparable products not so labeled  
19 and marketed.  
20

21 59. As an immediate, direct, and proximate result of Defendant’s false,  
22 misleading, and deceptive representations, Defendant injured the Plaintiff and the  
23 Class Members in that they:

24 a. Paid a sum of money for Products that were not what Defendant  
25 represented;

26 b. Paid a premium price for Products that were not what Defendant  
27 represented;  
28

- c. Were deprived of the benefit of the bargain because the Products they purchased were different from what Defendant warranted; and
- d. Were deprived of the benefit of the bargain because the Products they purchased had less value than what Defendant represented.

60. Plaintiff and the Class Members paid for Products that were "natural" but received Products that were not "natural." The products Plaintiff and the Class Members received were worth less than the products for which they paid.

61. Based on Defendant's misleading and deceptive representations, Defendant were able to, and did, charge a premium price for the Products over the cost of competitive products not bearing the misrepresentations.

62. Plaintiff and the Class Members paid money for the Products. However, Plaintiff and the Class Members did not obtain the full value of the advertised Products due to Defendant's misrepresentations and omissions. Plaintiff and the Class Members purchased, purchased more of, and/or paid more for, the Products than they would have had they known the truth about the Products. Consequently, Plaintiff and the Class Members have suffered injury in fact and lost money as a result of Defendant's wrongful conduct.

63. Defendant knew that consumers will pay more for a product marketed as "natural," and intended to deceive Plaintiff and putative Class Members by labeling and marketing the Products as purportedly natural products.

64. Plaintiff and Class Members paid for the Products over and above comparable products that did not purport to be "natural." Given that Plaintiff and Class Members paid for the Products based on Defendant's misrepresentations that

1 they are “natural,” Plaintiff and Class Members suffered an injury in the amount  
2 paid.

3 65. Additionally, Plaintiff and Class Members paid a premium for the  
4 Products over and above comparable products that did not purport to be “natural.”  
5 Given that Plaintiff and Class Members paid a premium for the Products based on  
6 Defendant’s misrepresentations that they are “natural,” Plaintiff and Class Members  
7 suffered an injury in the amount of the premium paid.  
8

9  
10 **CLASS DEFINITIONS AND ALLEGATIONS**

11 66. Plaintiff, pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23, brings this  
12 action on behalf of the following classes (collectively, the “Class,” “Classes,” and  
13 “Class Members”):  
14

- 15 a. Multi-State Consumer Class: All persons in the States of California,  
16 Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New  
17 Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Oregon, and Washington who  
18 purchased the Products.<sup>15</sup>  
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24 <sup>15</sup> The States in the Multi-State Consumer Class are limited to those States with  
25 similar consumer protection laws under the facts of this case: California (Cal. Bus. &  
26 Prof. Code § 17200, et seq.); Florida (Fla. Stat. § 501.201, et seq.); Illinois (815 ILCS  
27 505/1, et seq.); Maryland (Md. Com. Law §§ 13-301); Massachusetts (Mass. Gen. Laws  
28 Ch. 93A, et seq.); Michigan (Mich. Comp. Laws § 445.901, et seq.); Minnesota (Minn.  
Stat. § 325F.67, et seq.); Missouri (Mo. Rev. Stat. 407.010, et seq.); New Jersey (N.J.  
Stat. § 56:8-1, et seq.); New York (N.Y. Gen. Bus. Law § 349, et seq.); Pennsylvania  
(73 Pa. Stat. Ann. §§ 201-1 et seq.); Oregon (Or. Rev. Stat. §§ 646.605, et seq.); and  
Washington (Wash. Rev. Code § 19.86.010, et seq.).



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1 b. California Class: All persons who purchased Defendant's Products  
2 within the State of California and within the applicable statute of  
3 limitations period; and

4 c. Nationwide Class: All persons who purchased Defendant's Products  
5 within the United States and within the applicable statute of limitations  
6 period.  
7

8 67. Excluded from the Classes are Defendant, its parents, subsidiaries,  
9 affiliates, officers, and directors, those who purchased the Products for resale, all  
10 persons who make a timely election to be excluded from the Classes, the judge to  
11 whom the case is assigned and any immediate family members thereof, and those  
12 who assert claims for personal injury.  
13

14 68. The members of the Classes are so numerous that joinder of all Class  
15 Members is impracticable. Defendant has sold, at a minimum, millions of units of the  
16 Products to Class Members.  
17

18 69. There is a well-defined community of interest in the questions of law and  
19 fact involved in this case. Questions of law and fact common to the members of the  
20 putative classes that predominate over questions that may affect individual Class  
21 Members include, but are not limited to the following:

22 a. whether Defendant misrepresented material facts concerning the  
23 Products on the label of every product;

24 b. whether Defendant's conduct was unfair and/or deceptive;

25 c. whether Defendant has been unjustly enriched as a result of the  
26 unlawful, fraudulent, and unfair conduct alleged in this Complaint such  
27  
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1 that it would be inequitable for Defendant to retain the benefits  
2 conferred upon them by Plaintiff and the Classes;

3 d. whether Plaintiff and the Class are entitled to equitable and/or  
4 injunctive relief;

5 e. whether Defendant breached express and implied warranties to Plaintiff  
6 and the Classes;

7 f. whether Plaintiff and the Classes have sustained damages with respect  
8 to the claims asserted, and if so, the proper measure of their damages.  
9

10 70. Plaintiff's claims are typical of those of other Class Members because  
11 Plaintiff, like all members of the Classes, purchased Defendant's Products bearing  
12 the natural representations and Plaintiff sustained damages from Defendant's  
13 wrongful conduct.  
14

15 71. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the Classes  
16 and has retained counsel that is experienced in litigating complex class actions.  
17 Plaintiff has no interests which conflict with those of the classes.  
18

19 72. A class action is superior to any other available means for the fair and  
20 efficient adjudication of this controversy, and no unusual difficulties are likely to be  
21 encountered in the management of this class action. The damages or other financial  
22 detriment suffered by Plaintiff and the other Class Members are relatively small  
23 compared to the burden and expense that would be required to individually litigate  
24 their claims against Defendant, making it impracticable for Class Members to  
25 individually seek redress for Defendant's wrongful conduct. Even if Class Members  
26 could afford individual litigation, the court system could not. Individualized litigation  
27 creates a potential for inconsistent or contradictory judgments, and increases the  
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1 delay and expense to all parties and the court system. By contrast, the class action  
2 device presents far fewer management difficulties, and provides the benefits of single  
3 adjudication, economies of scale, and comprehensive supervision by a single court.

4 73. The prerequisites to maintaining a class action for equitable relief are  
5 met as Defendant has acted or refused to act on grounds generally applicable to the  
6 classes, thereby making appropriate equitable relief with respect to the classes as a  
7 whole.  
8

9 74. The prosecution of separate actions by members of the classes would  
10 create a risk of establishing inconsistent rulings and/or incompatible standards of  
11 conduct for Defendant. For example, one court might enjoin Defendant from  
12 performing the challenged acts, whereas another might not. Additionally, individual  
13 actions could be dispositive of the interests of the classes even where certain Class  
14 Members are not parties to such actions.  
15

16 **COUNT I**  
17 **Violation of California’s Unfair Competition Law (“UCL”),**  
18 **CAL. BUS. & PROF. CODE §§ 17200, et seq.**

19 75. Plaintiff repeats and realleges each and every allegation contained in  
20 the foregoing paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

21 76. Plaintiff brings this Count individually and on behalf of the members of  
22 the California Class.

23 77. Defendant is subject to California’s Unfair Competition Law, Cal. Bus. &  
24 Prof. Code §§ 17200, et seq. The UCL provides, in pertinent part: “Unfair competition  
25 shall mean and include unlawful, unfair or fraudulent business practices and unfair,  
26 deceptive, untrue or misleading advertising ....”  
27  
28

1 78. Defendant violated the “unlawful” prong of the UCL by violating  
2 California’s Consumer Legal Remedies Acts (“CLRA”) and False Advertising Law  
3 (“FAL”), as alleged herein.

4 79. Defendant’s misrepresentations and other conduct, described herein,  
5 violated the “unfair” prong of the UCL in that its conduct is substantially injurious to  
6 consumers, offends public policy, and is immoral, unethical, oppressive, and  
7 unscrupulous, as the gravity of the conduct outweighs any alleged benefits.

8 80. Defendant violated the “fraudulent” prong of the UCL by  
9 misrepresenting that the Products are “natural” when, in fact, they are made with  
10 synthetic ingredients.  
11

12 81. Plaintiff and the California Class Members lost money or property as a  
13 result of Defendant’s UCL violations because: because: (a) they would not have  
14 purchased the Products on the same terms if they knew that the Products were made  
15 with synthetic ingredients (b) they paid a substantial price premium compared to  
16 other cosmetic products due to Defendant’s misrepresentations; and (c) the Products  
17 do not have the characteristics, uses, or benefits as promised.  
18

19 82. In accordance with Bus. & Prof. Code § 17203, Plaintiff seeks an order  
20 enjoining Defendant from continuing to conduct business through unlawful, unfair,  
21 and/or fraudulent acts and practices, and to commence a corrective advertising  
22 campaign.  
23

24 83. Plaintiff and the California Class also seek an order for the restitution of  
25 all monies from the sale of the Products, which were unjustly acquired through acts  
26 of unlawful competition.  
27  
28

1 84. Because Plaintiff and the California Class Members' claims under the  
2 "unfair" prong of the UCL sweep more broadly than their claims under the FAL,  
3 CLRA, or UCL's "fraudulent" prong, Plaintiff's legal remedies are inadequate to fully  
4 compensate Plaintiff for all of Defendant's challenged behavior.  
5

6  
7 **COUNT II**  
8 **Violation of The False Advertising Law ("FAL"),**  
9 **CAL. BUS. & PROF. CODE §§ 17500, et seq.**

10 85. Plaintiff repeats and realleges each and every allegation contained in  
11 the foregoing paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

12 86. Plaintiff brings this Count individually and on behalf of the members of  
13 the California Class.

14 87. California's False Advertising Law, Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 17500, et  
15 seq., makes it "unlawful for any person to make or disseminate or cause to be made or  
16 disseminated before the public in this state, ... in any advertising device ... or in any  
17 other manner or means whatever, including over the Internet, any statement,  
18 concerning ... personal property or services, professional or otherwise, or performance  
19 or disposition thereof, which is untrue or misleading and which is known, or which by  
20 the exercise of reasonable care should be known, to be untrue or misleading."  
21

22 88. Defendant committed acts of false advertising, as defined by §§17500, *et*  
23 *seq.*, by misrepresenting that the Products are "natural" when they are not.

24 89. Defendant knew or should have known through the exercise of  
25 reasonable care (i.e. pre-market testing) that its representations about the Products  
26 were untrue and misleading.  
27  
28

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1 90. Defendant's actions in violation of §§ 17500, *et seq.* were false and  
2 misleading such that the general public is and was likely to be deceived.

3 91. Plaintiff and the California Class Members lost money or property as a  
4 result of Defendant's FAL violations because: (a) they would not have purchased the  
5 Products on the same terms if they knew that the Products were made with synthetic  
6 ingredients; (b) they paid a substantial price premium compared to other cosmetic  
7 products due to Defendant's misrepresentations; and (c) the Products do not have the  
8 characteristics, uses, or benefits as promised.  
9

10 92. Defendant profited from the sale of the falsely and deceptively  
11 advertised Products to unwary consumers.  
12

13 93. As a result, Plaintiff, the California Class, and the general public are  
14 entitled to injunctive and equitable relief, restitution, and an order for the  
15 disgorgement of the funds by which Defendant was unjustly enriched.  
16

17 94. Pursuant to Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17535, Plaintiff, on behalf of  
18 herself and the California Class, seeks an order enjoining Defendant from continuing  
19 to engage in deceptive business practices, false advertising, and any other act  
20 prohibited by law, including those set forth in this Complaint.

21 95. Because the Court has broad discretion to award restitution under the  
22 FAL and could, when assessing restitution under the FAL, apply a standard different  
23 than that applied to assessing damages under the CLRA, and restitution is not  
24 limited to returning to Plaintiff and California Class Members monies in which they  
25 have an interest, but more broadly serves to deter the offender and others from future  
26 violations, the legal remedies available under the CLRA and commercial code are  
27  
28

1 more limited than the equitable remedies available under the FAL, and are therefore  
2 inadequate.

3  
4 **COUNT III**  
5 **Violation of The Consumer Legal Remedies Act (“CLRA”),**  
6 **CAL. CIV. CODE §§ 1750, et seq.**

7 96. Plaintiff repeats and realleges each and every allegation contained in  
8 the foregoing paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

9 97. Plaintiff brings this Count individually and on behalf of the members of  
10 the California Class.

11 98. This cause of action is brought pursuant to California’s Consumers Legal  
12 Remedies Act, Cal. Civ. Code §§ 1750 (the “CLRA”).

13 99. Plaintiff and the other members of the Classes are “consumers,” as the  
14 term is defined by California Civil Code § 1761(d), because they bought the Products  
15 for personal, family, or household purposes.

16 100. Plaintiff, the other members of the Classes, and Defendant has engaged  
17 in “transactions,” as that term is defined by California Civil Code § 1761(e).

18 101. The conduct alleged in this Complaint constitutes unfair methods of  
19 competition and unfair and deceptive acts and practices for the purpose of the CLRA,  
20 and the conduct was undertaken by Defendant in transactions intended to result in,  
21 and which did result in, the sale of goods to consumers.

22 102. As alleged more fully above, Defendant has violated the CLRA by falsely  
23 representing to Plaintiff and the other members of the Classes that the Products are  
24 “natural” when in fact they are made with synthetic ingredients.

25 103. As a result of engaging in such conduct, Defendant has violated  
26 California Civil Code § 1770(a)(5), (a)(7) and (a)(9).  
27  
28

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1 104. Pursuant to the provisions of Cal. Civ. Code § 1782(a), Plaintiff provided  
2 notice to Defendant of its alleged violations of the CLRA, demanding that Defendant  
3 correct such violations, and providing it with the opportunity to correct its business  
4 practices. Notice was sent via certified mail, return receipt requested on December 6,  
5 2022. As of the date of filing this complaint, Defendant has not responded.  
6 Accordingly, if after 30 days no satisfactory response to resolve this litigation on a  
7 class-wide basis has been received, Plaintiff will seek leave to amend this request to  
8 seek restitution and actual damages as provided by the CLRA.  
9

10 105. Pursuant to California Civil Code § 1780, Plaintiff seeks injunctive  
11 relief, reasonable attorneys' fees and costs, and any other relief that the Court deems  
12 proper.  
13

14 **COUNT IV**  
15 **Unjust Enrichment**

16 106. Plaintiff repeats and realleges each and every allegation contained in  
17 the foregoing paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

18 107. Plaintiff brings this claim individually and on behalf of the members of  
19 the proposed Classes against the Defendant.  
20

21 108. At all times relevant hereto, Defendant deceptively marketed,  
22 advertised, and sold merchandise to Plaintiff and the Classes.

23 109. Plaintiff and members of the Classes conferred upon Defendant  
24 nongratuitous payments for the Products that they would not have if not for  
25 Defendant's deceptive advertising and marketing. Defendant accepted or retained the  
26 nongratuitous benefits conferred by Plaintiff and members of the Classes, with full  
27 knowledge and awareness that, as a result of Defendant's deception, Plaintiff and  
28



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1 members of the Classes were not receiving a product of the quality, nature, fitness, or  
2 value that had been represented by Defendant and reasonable consumers would have  
3 expected.

4 110. Defendant has been unjustly enriched in retaining the revenues derived  
5 from Plaintiff's and Class Members' purchases of the Products. Retention of those  
6 monies under these circumstances is unjust and inequitable because of Defendant's  
7 misrepresentations about the Products, which caused injuries to Plaintiff and Class  
8 Members because they would not have purchased the Products if the true facts had  
9 been known.

10 111. Because Defendant's retention of the non-gratuitous benefits conferred  
11 on it by Plaintiff and members of the Classes is unjust and inequitable, Defendant  
12 must pay restitution to Plaintiff and members of the Classes for its unjust  
13 enrichment, as ordered by the Court.

14  
15  
16 **COUNT V**  
17 **Violation of State Consumer Protection Statutes**

18 112. Plaintiff repeats and realleges each and every allegation above as if set  
19 forth herein.

20 113. Plaintiff brings this Count individually and on behalf of the members of  
21 the Multi-State Consumer Class.

22 114. The Consumer Protection Acts of the States in the Multi-State  
23 Consumer Class prohibit the use of unfair or deceptive business practices in the  
24 conduct of trade or commerce.  
25  
26  
27  
28

1 115. Defendant intended that Plaintiff and the other members of the Multi-  
2 State Consumer Class would rely upon their deceptive conduct, and a reasonable  
3 person would in fact be misled by its deceptive conduct.

4 116. As a result of the Defendant's use or employment of unfair or deceptive  
5 acts or business practices, Plaintiff, and other members of Multi-State Consumer  
6 Class, have sustained damages in an amount to be proven at trial.  
7

8  
9 **RELIEF DEMANDED**

10 117. WHEREFORE, Plaintiff, individually and on behalf of all others  
11 similarly situated, seeks judgment against Defendant, as follows:  
12

- 13 a. For an order certifying the Class under Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of  
14 Civil Procedure and naming Plaintiff as representative of the Classes  
15 and Plaintiff's attorneys as Class Counsel to represent the members of  
16 the Classes;  
17  
18 b. For an order declaring the Defendant's conduct violates the statutes and  
19 laws referenced herein;  
20  
21 c. For an order awarding, as appropriate, compensatory and monetary  
22 damages, statutory damages, restitution or disgorgement to Plaintiff  
23 and the Classes for all causes of action;  
24  
25 d. For an order requiring Defendant to immediately cease and desist from  
26 selling its misbranded Products in violation of law; enjoining Defendant  
27 from continuing to label, market, advertise, distribute, and sell the  
28 Products in the unlawful manner described herein; and ordering  
Defendant to engage in corrective action;

- 1 e. For prejudgment and postjudgment interest on all amounts awarded;  
2 f. For an order awarding punitive damages; and  
3 For an order awarding attorneys' fees and expenses and costs of suit  
4  
5

6 **JURY TRIAL DEMAND**

7 Plaintiff demands a jury trial on all causes of action so triable.  
8

9 Dated: December 6, 2022

10 **Good Gustafson Aumais LLP**

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12 J. Ryan Gustafson (Cal. Bar No. 220802)  
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*\*Pro hac vice forthcoming*

*Counsel for Plaintiff and the Proposed Class*

# ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: [Clearly Natural Essentials Hand Soaps Falsely Advertised as 'Natural,' Class Action Says](#)

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