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10			
11	SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA		
12	COUNTY OF ALAMEDA		
	THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF	Case No.	
13	CALIFORNIA <i>ex rel.</i> BAY AREA AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT;	COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES,	
14	PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA ex	INJUNCTION, AND OTHER RELIEF	
15	rel. URSULA JONES DICKSON, ALAMEDA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY,	Health & Safety Code sections 41513 and 42402 et seq.; Civil Code sections 3479 and	
16	·	3480; Business & Professions Code section	
17	Plaintiff,	17200 et seq.	
18	VS.	Exempt from fees pursuant to Gov't. Code	
19	RADIUS RECYCLING, INC., an Oregon	Section 6103	
20	corporation, formerly known as SCHNITZER STEEL INDUSTRIES, INC., an Oregon		
21	corporation, doing business as SCHNITZER		
	STEEL PRODUCTS CO. and RADIUS RECYCLING, and DOES Nos. 1-10,		
22	The replice, and Bolls ress. 1 10,		
23	Defendants.		
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COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES, INJUNCTION, AND OTHER RELIEF

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PLAINTIFFS, THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, by and through the BAY AREA AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT ("AIR DISTRICT") and URSULA JONES DICKSON, DISTRICT ATTORNEY OF ALAMEDA COUNTY ("DISTRICT ATTORNEY") (collectively "THE PEOPLE"), acting to protect public health, welfare, and air 5 resources of the State of California, bring this action seeking civil penalties and injunctive relief against RADIUS RECYCLING, INC., an Oregon corporation, formerly known as SCHNITZER 6 STEEL INDUSTRIES, INC., an Oregon corporation, doing business as SCHNITZER STEEL PRODUCTS CO. and RADIUS RECYCLING ("DEFENDANT" or "RADIUS"), and DOES 1 8 9 through 10 (collectively "DEFENDANTS") for violations of AIR DISTRICT Regulations ("District 10 Regulations") 5-301, 6-4-301.1, 6-1-301, and 1-301, Health and Safety Code section 41700, and 11 Business and Professions Code section 17200 et seq., among other relief. Wherefore, the PEOPLE 12 allege as follows:

### INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF ACTION

- 1. DEFENDANTS own and operate a metal recycling facility located at 1101 Embarcadero West in Oakland, California that collects, processes, and recycles raw scrap metal, and provides processed scrap metal to mills and foundries ("the FACILITY").
- 2. On August 9, 2023, at approximately 5:30 p.m., a large fire ignited at the FACILITY in a pre-shredder infeed pile created and maintained by RADIUS. The fire burned until approximately 8:30 a.m. on August 10, 2023. The smoke, and air contaminants created by the blaze, negatively impacted communities across the East Bay including West Oakland.
- 3. Prior to the fire starting on August 4, 2023, the metals shredder at the FACILITY broke down and remained offline until the night of August 10, 2023.
- 4. Nonetheless, RADIUS continued to receive incoming recyclable and recoverable metals from suppliers even though the FACILITY would not be able to process the scrap metal through its only metal shredder.
- 5. Because RADIUS received so much incoming metals, it started a new pile in a location within the FACILITY, referred to as the "alligator," that was not equipped with fire detection devices, including infrared or Forward Looking Infrared ("FLIR") cameras to monitor for

temperature fluctuations within the pile, or water cannons in case a fire broke out within the alligator-infeed pile.

- 6. As a result, during the time leading up to the fire, no stationary monitoring for temperature with an infrared camera was performed, as required.
- 7. RADIUS failed to conduct hourly temperature monitoring using a handheld FLIR camera, as required.
- 8. Further, RADIUS also failed to regularly water the storage pile that ignited on August 9, 2023, in advance of the fire, as needed.
- 9. The pile that ignited had not been watered for at least 2.5 hours before the alarm was reported to the Oakland Fire Department.



Figure 1

- 10. The FACILITY had similar fires in 2018 and 2020 occurring in piles created and maintained by RADIUS.
- 11. The FACILITY is located in West Oakland, a community that experiences disproportionate environmental harms and risks due to exposures or cumulative impacts from

environmental hazards and qualifies as an overburdened community by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and according to District Regulation 2-1-243.

- 12. The smoke, containing toxic air contaminants, exacerbated the already elevated cumulative air pollution impacts within this community and had similar deleterious effects on many other Bay Area communities.
- 13. For the reasons discussed *infra*, the fire itself, the air emissions it caused, and DEFENDANTS' conduct before, during, and after the fire violated AIR DISTRICT Regulations 5-301, 6-4-301.1, 6-1-301, and 1-301; Health and Safety Code section 41700; Civil Code sections 3749 and 3480. and Business and Professions Code section 17200 *et seq*.

### **THE PARTIES**

### A. THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

- 14. The AIR DISTRICT is, and has been at all relevant times alleged in this Complaint, a body corporate and politic, organized pursuant to Chapter 4 of Part 3 of Division 26 of the California Health and Safety Code ("Health & Saf. Code") with the power to bring this action in the name of the People of the State of California and on behalf of the AIR DISTRICT. (Health & Saf. Code §§ 40700, 40701, 41513, and 42403(a).)
- 15. The AIR DISTRICT is, and has been at all relevant times alleged in this Complaint, the governmental agency charged with the primary responsibility for controlling air pollution from non-vehicular sources in all or part of the nine Bay Area counties, including all of Alameda County. (Health and Saf. Code §§ 39002, 40000, 40001(a), 40200, 40702 and 42402 *et seq.*)
- 16. The AIR DISTRICT is, and has been at all relevant times alleged in this Complaint, a special district pursuant to Government Code section 16271(d) and is the agency responsible for the enforcement of air quality laws and regulations for Alameda County and other Bay Area counties.
- 17. Business and Professions Code section 17206, subdivision (a), provides that actions to enforce the Unfair Competition Law ("UCL"), , Sections 17200 *et seq.*, may be brought by any district attorney in the name of the people of the State of California.
- 18. The DISTRICT ATTORNEY is authorized under Business and Professions Code section 17203, among other laws, to seek an injunction of violations of Health and Safety Code

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section 41700, Civil Code sections 3479 and 3480, and to seek civil penalties pursuant to Health and Safety Code sections 42402, 42402.1, and 42403.

19. THE PEOPLE bring this action, acting in the public interest to protect the public health and environment against violations of California's air pollution control laws. By this action, THE PEOPLE seek to impose civil penalties and injunctive relief for DEFENDANTS' violations.

#### В. **DEFENDANTS**

- 20. THE PEOPLE are informed and believe and thereon allege that RADIUS has its principal place of business at 299 Southwest Clay Street, Suite 400 in Portland, Oregon.
- 21. THE PEOPLE are informed and believe and thereon allege that, at all times relevant herein, RADIUS owned and operated a metal recycling FACILITY located at 1101 Embarcadero West in Oakland, California that collects, processes, and recycles raw scrap metal, and provides processed scrap metal to mills and foundries. Once the scrap metal is received by RADIUS, it is processed by sorting, storing, shearing, shredding, torching, and baling for melting and use in the production of new steel and other metal products.
- 22. THE PEOPLE are informed and believe and thereon allege that RADIUS is now, and has been, at all times relevant herein, responsible for the violative conduct alleged herein, including, but not limited to, the management, direction, supervision, and/or decisions of RADIUS and its officers, employees and/or agents, and/or related to its business operations, management, and environmental compliance and associated with its FACILITY, operations thereof, and fires located thereupon.
- 23. THE PEOPLE are informed and believe and thereon allege that RADIUS is now, and was at all times relevant herein, a corporation that was formed under the laws of Oregon and conducts business in California including at the FACILITY.
- 24. THE PEOPLE are informed and believe and thereon allege that on February 1, 2024, SCHNITZER STEEL INDUSTRIES, INC. amended its articles of incorporation to change its name to RADIUS RECYCLING, INC. RADIUS, through its predecessor entity SCHNITZER STEEL INDUSTRIES, INC., also does business as SCHNITZER STEEL PRODUCTS CO. and RADIUS RECYCLING.

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- 25. THE PEOPLE are informed and believe and thereon allege that RADIUS employs approximately 3,500 employees across approximately one hundred (100) operating locations (including over fifty recycling facilities) in North America.
- 26. Any act of RADIUS, alleged herein to have constituted a violation of California law or AIR DISTRICT Regulations, was carried out by RADIUS, or at its direction, or with its knowledge, supervision, ratification, or acquiescence. Any failure to act or any omission alleged herein constituting a violation of California law resulted from DEFENDANTS' failure to act or failure to direct or authorize others to act. RADIUS failed to exercise reasonable individual and/or business judgments, and/or failed to inquire and/or perform due diligence regarding individual and/or business activities.
- 27. THE PEOPLE do not know the true names, capacities, and liabilities of DOES Nos. 1-10, inclusive, and therefore sue them under fictitious names. THE PEOPLE will amend this Complaint to allege the true name and capacities of the DOE DEFENDANTS upon being ascertained. Each of these DEFENDANTS was in some way legally responsible for the acts, omissions and/or violations alleged herein.

### VENUE AND JURISDICTION

- 28. This Court has jurisdiction over the subject matter giving rise to this Complaint because it is a court of general jurisdiction. (California Constitution, Article VI, § 10.)
- 29. This Court has personal jurisdiction over RADIUS because RADIUS conducts business within the State of California, including but not limited to Alameda County, on a substantial, continuous, and systematic basis.
- 30. THE PEOPLE are informed and believe and thereon allege that the Court has personal jurisdiction over defendant DOES 1 through 10 because each DOE defendant is either domiciled, incorporated, and/or has its regular place of business in the State of California, and/or is conducting business within the State of California on a substantial, continuous, and systematic basis.
- 31. Venue is proper in this Court because the violations of state laws and AIR DISTRICT Regulations, which are the subject of the claims asserted in this Complaint, arose within the County of Alameda. (Code of Civ. Proc. §§ 393(a), 395(a).)

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TRIAL-SETTING PREFERENCE

32. An action brought by the AIR DISTRICT on behalf of THE PEOPLE in this Court pursuant to Health & Safety Code section 42403 shall take precedence over all civil matters on the calendar of this Court, except as to those matters that granted by law take equal precedence on the calendar. (Health & Saf. Code § 42404.)

### STATUTORY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- 33. Pursuant to Health & Safety Code section 39013, "'[a]ir contaminant' or 'air pollution' means any discharge, release, or other propagation into the atmosphere and includes, but is not limited to, smoke, charred paper, dust, soot, grime, carbon, fumes, gases, odors, particulate matter, acids, or any combination thereof."
- 34. Pursuant to Health & Safety Code section 39665, subdivision (a), "'[t]oxic air contaminant' means an air pollutant which may cause or contribute to an increase in mortality or in serious illness, or which may pose a present or potential hazard to human health."

### A. AIR DISTRICT Rules Regulating Fires

35. Pursuant to AIR DISTRICT Regulation 5-301.1, except as provided in circumstances not applicable here, entities, like DEFENDANTS, "shall not ignite, cause to be ignited, permit to be ignited, or suffer, allow, or maintain any fires within the District." (AIR DISTRICT Regulation 5-301 is available at <a href="https://www.baaqmd.gov/~/media/dotgov/">https://www.baaqmd.gov/~/media/dotgov/</a>.)

## **B.** AIR DISTRICT Regulations Regarding Emissions Minimization Plans

- 36. Pursuant to AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6-4-301.1, ninety (90) days from the date that an Emissions Minimization Plan ("EMP") is approved by the AIR DISTRICT pursuant to AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6-4-405.5, "the owner or operator of a metal recycling facility [like DEFENDANT] shall operate the facility at all times in accordance with its approved EMP[.]"
- 37. Pursuant to AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6-4-401.1, the "owner or operator of any metal recycling facility[,]" like RADIUS, must "develop and submit to the [AIR DISTRICT] ... an [EMP] that details management practices, measures, equipment and procedures that are employed or will be implemented to minimize fugitive emissions."
  - 38. Pursuant to AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6-4-404, regulated entities, like RADIUS,

were obligated to submit their draft EMPs to the AIR DISTRICT for review, and the AIR DISTRICT was then obligated to determine whether or not the draft EMPs were "complete" and, if not, notify regulated entities about how to complete them. Following that process, pursuant to AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6-4-405, submitted EMPs are subject to a public notice-and-comment period.

39. Pursuant to AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6-4-409, within ninety (90) days of the following events: the AIR DISTRICT's determination that a metal recycling facility "violated Section 6-4-301" or the AIR DISTRICT's determination that the "owner or operator violated District, State or federal air quality regulations pertaining to emissions of [particulate matter]," the AIR DISTRICT "may notify the owner or operator of a metal recycling facility where the triggering event occurred ... [and demand that they] submit a complete and accurate revised EMP to the [AIR DISTRICT] that updates the EMP to include the modified operation or source or to prevent a future violation of the EMP or applicable law or regulation specified herein, in accordance with schedule set forth in Section 6-4-404." (AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6, Rule 4 is available at <a href="https://www.baaqmd.gov/~/media/dotgov/">www.baaqmd.gov/~/media/dotgov/</a>.)

### C. AIR DISTRICT Rules Regulating Visible Emissions

40. Pursuant to AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6-1-301, subject to exceptions not applicable here, entities like DEFENDANTS "shall not emit from any source for a period or aggregate periods of more than three minutes in any hour, a visible emission that is as dark or darker than No. 1 on the Ringelmann Chart, or of such opacity as to obscure an observer's view to an equivalent or greater degree." (AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6, Rule 1 is available at <a href="https://www.baaqmd.gov/~/media/dotgov/">www.baaqmd.gov/~/media/dotgov/</a>.)

### D. Public Nuisance

- 41. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 41700, subject to exceptions not applicable here, entities, like DEFENDANTS, "shall not discharge from any source whatsoever quantities of air contaminants or other material that cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public, or that endanger the comfort, repose, health, or safety of any of those persons or the public, or that cause, or have a natural tendency to cause, injury or damage to business or property."
- 42. Likewise, pursuant to AIR DISTRICT Regulation 1-301, "[n]o person shall discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other material which cause injury,

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detriment, nuisance or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or the public; or which endangers the comfort, repose, health or safety of any such persons or the public, or which causes, or has a natural tendency to cause, injury or damage to business or property." (AIR DISTRICT Regulation 1-301 is available at <a href="https://www.baaqmd.gov/~/media/dotgov/">https://www.baaqmd.gov/~/media/dotgov/</a>.)

- 43. A "nuisance" is defined in Civil Code section 3479 as "[a]nything which is injurious to health, ... or is indecent or offensive to the senses, or an obstruction to the free use of property, so as to interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of life or property...."
- 44. A "public nuisance" is defined in Civil Code section 3480 as a nuisance "which affects at the same time an entire community or neighborhood, or any considerable number of persons, although the extent of the annoyance or damage inflicted upon individuals may be unequal."
- 45. The maintenance of a business that unlawfully discharges or emits air contaminants at, and outside the boundaries of, its facilities is a threat to public health and safety and to the environment, and to the people of California, and constitutes a continuing nuisance to the surrounding community pursuant to Civil Code section 3479 and 3480. Pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 731 and Civil Code section 3491, the District Attorney may bring an action to abate a public nuisance.

### Ε. Strict Liability Penalties for Violations of Air District Regulations

- 46. Pursuant to Health & Safety Code section 42402, subdivision (a), any entity, like DEFENDANTS, "who violates this part ... or any rule, regulation, permit, or order of a district, ... is strictly liable for a civil penalty of not more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000)." Maximum penalty amounts are adjusted annually based on changes in the California Consumer Price Index, such that the maximum penalty under Health & Safety Code section 42402, subdivision (a) is now \$6,275. (Health and Saf. Code § 42411.)
- 47. Pursuant to Health & Safety Code section 42402, subdivisions (b)(1) and (b)(2)(A), "a person who violates any provision of this part, ... or any rule, regulation, permit or order of a district, ... is strictly liable for a civil penalty of not more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000)[,]" unless the "person accused of the violation alleges by affirmative defense and establishes that the violation was by an act that was not the result of intentional conduct or negligent conduct." Adjusted

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to 2025 rates based on the California Consumer Price Index, the maximum penalty under Health & Safety Code section 42402, subdivisions (b)(1) and (b)(2)(A), is now \$12,550. (Health and Saf. Code § 42411.)

### F. **Penalties for Negligent Emissions of Air Contaminants**

48. Pursuant to Health & Safety Code section 42402.1, subdivision (a), "[a]ny person who negligently emits an air contaminant in violation of this part or any rule, regulation, permit, or order of the state board or of a district, including a district hearing board, pertaining to emission regulations or limitations is liable for a civil penalty of not more than twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000)." The maximum penalty amount for a violation of Health & Safety Code section 42402.1, subdivision (a), based on adjustments to the California Consumer Price Index, is now \$31,375. (Health and Saf. Code § 42411.)

### G. **Unfair Competition Law**

- 49. Business and Professions Code section 17200 provides that "unfair competition shall mean and include any unlawful, unfair or fraudulent business act or practice[.]" Business and Professions Code section 17203 provides that "(a)ny person performing or proposing to perform an act of unfair competition within this state may be enjoined in any court of competent jurisdiction."
- 50. Unlawful acts under the UCL include any act that is unlawful that is conducted as part of business activity and therefore include violations of statutory law including the Health and Safety Code. Violation of a permit obligation or an applicable regulation or administrative rule is also an unlawful act under the UCL.
- 51. Business and Professions Code section 17206, subdivision (a) provides that any person violating Section 17200 "shall be liable for a civil penalty not to exceed two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) for each violation, which shall be assessed and recovered in a civil action brought in the name of the People of the State of California ... by any district attorney." Under Section 17205, these penalties are "cumulative to each other and to any other remedies or penalties available under all other laws of this state."

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### **GENERAL ALLEGATIONS**

- 52. DEFENDANTS, at all times relevant to the claims in this Complaint, and continuing through the present, were legally responsible for compliance with the California Health & Safety Code and regulations promulgated thereunder, including the AIR DISTRICT's regulations and rules.
- 53. THE PEOPLE are informed and believe and thereon allege that DEFENDANTS, at all times relevant to the claims in this Complaint, operated the FACILITY, which is bounded to the south by the Oakland Inner Harbor, to the east and west by the Port of Oakland, and to the north by Embarcadero West and Union Pacific Railroad tracks.
- 54. The FACIITY is located 0.35 miles from the nearest hospital, 0.12 miles from the nearest school, 0.39 miles from the closest day care facility, and 0.23 miles from the nearest residences.
- 55. RADIUS failed to store its scrap metal properly and in accordance with Air District requirements, and as a result DEFENDANTS caused a major fire with significant adverse impact in the neighboring community and throughout many parts of the Bay Area.

### A. The August 2023 Fire

- 56. On August 9, 2023, at or around 5:30 p.m., DEFENDANTS, through negligent acts and omissions, started a fire at the FACILITY.
- 57. The Oakland Fire Department responded to the fire alarm arising from ignition of the infeed "tin/light iron" materials pile at DEFENDANTS' FACILITY, which was then stored in a location onsite referred to as "the alligator."
- 58. The metal shredder at the FACILITY broke down on August 4, 2023, and remained offline until the night of August 10, 2023.
- 59. Nonetheless, RADIUS continued to accept and/or purchase incoming recyclable and recoverable metal from suppliers even though the FACILITY would not be able to process the scrap metal through its only metal shredder.
- 60. The PEOPLE are informed and believe and thereon allege that, due to the inoperability of the FACILITY'S metal shredder during this time period, RADIUS stockpiled excess incoming material in an alternate location at the FACILITY, referred to as the "alligator,"

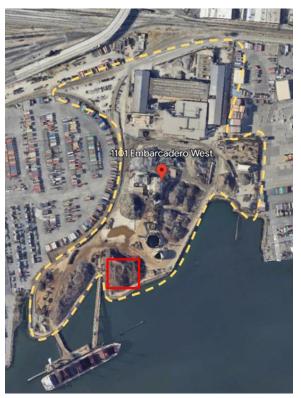


Figure 2 (Red square indicates location of fire at tin/light iron pile, aka "alligator")

since the primary location for the pre-shred scrap pile near the shredder was full.

- 61. This alternatively located infeed pile, where the fire started, was not monitored by FLIR cameras, watered as needed during hours of operation, and was not equipped with, or accessible by, water cannons.
- 62. RADIUS placed and stored pre-shred infeed materials at this alternative location from August 7 through August 9, 2023.
- 63. As a result, by the time the fire broke out at the "alligator" pile, itwas approximately 112 ft. long, 95 ft. wide, and 30 ft. high, and was comprised of approximately 1,800 tons of material.
- 64. The pile was largely comprised of light metal scrap such as tin, iron, aluminum, and steel, and also contained nonmetallic materials such as plastics, upholstery, and foam.
- 65. Starting around 6:00 p.m. on August 9, 2023, and continuing through 8:30 a.m. on August 10, 2023, when the Oakland Fire Department extinguished the fire, residents in the communities surrounding the FACILITY submitted complaints to the AIR DISTRICT regarding the

odor and health impacts caused by the fire's smoke.

- 66. The AIR DISTRICT received a total of fifty (50) odor and smoke complaints related to the fire. Thirty-three (33) of the complaints were reported as having occurred on August 9, 2023, and seventeen (17) complaints were reported as having occurred on August 10, 2023.
- 67. According to wind data, northerly/westerly winds present when the fire started pushing the smoke south and east of Oakland, and then the winds started shifting blowing to the north and east. Accordingly, complaints were received from as far south as Milpitas, as far east as Livermore, and as far north as the cities of Crockett (Contra Costa County) and Benicia (Solano County).
- 68. The majority of complaints described the odor as having a "burning plastic," "electrical fire," or "fire/smoke" smell. Multiple complainants reported experiencing acute symptoms from inhalation of the odors/smoke, including nausea, headaches, burning eyes, and throat irritation.
- 69. The AIR DISTRICT issued an air quality advisory on August 9, 2023, for smoke from the FACILITY, stating that winds were expected to push the smoke south and east with potential impacts as far south as San Jose.
- 70. On August 10, 2023, the AIR DISTRICT extended the air quality advisory, stating that smoke impacts had shifted north and east and were expected to impact parts of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.
- 71. In addition to the subject fire discussed *infra*, two other large scrap metal pile fires have occurred at the FACILITY since 2018 (one in August 2018 and another in July 2020), both of which resulted in the unlawful discharge/emission of smoke and other air contaminants into the surrounding communities.

### B. DEFENDANTS' Failure to Comply with the Emissions Minimization Plan

- 72. Pursuant to AIR DISTRICT Regulations 6-4-401.1, 6-4-404, and 6-4-405, RADIUS prepared and submitted an EMP for the FACILITY for approval in May 2021. On July 31, 2022, the AIR DISTRICT approved the EMP for the FACILITY.
  - 73. Pursuant to AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6, Rule 4, Section 301.1, by October 29,

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2022, RADIUS shall operate the FACILITY at all times in accordance with its approved EMP.

- 74. AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6-4-301 required RADIUS to comply with its EMP since when the EMP became effective, on or about October 29, 2022.
- 75. The EMP requires RADIUS to install and operate stationary infrared cameras to monitor the temperature of the shredder infeed storage piles onsite twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven (7) days per week
- 76. The EMP also requires RADIUS to manually monitor the infeed materials piles via handheld FLIR cameras on an hourly basis.
- 77. The EMP, in relevant parts, further requires RADIUS to take other actions to prevent and minimize the severity of fires onsite, including but not limited to requirements that DEFENDANTS store fire suppression foam in an easily accessible location onsite to be used by the Oakland Fire Department in case of fire; spray water on all unprocessed materials piles during all hours of operation as needed; and minimize the size of all processed material piles.
- 78. Yet, according to emails sent by RADIUS to the AIR DISTRICT and the AIR DISTRICT's own investigation, RADIUS violated AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6-4-301.1 by failing to conduct any handheld FLIR camera temperature monitoring before the fire (let alone handheld FLIR monitoring of material stockpiles on an hourly basis), failing to position any stationary infrared camera on the shredder infeed pile where the fire occurred, and failing to keep the pile size of the shredder infeed materials to a minimum by shredding the maximum amount possible on a daily basis. The infeed materials pile that caught fire on August 9, 2023, was not watered as needed, monitored for temperature, nor limited in size, as required by the FACILITY's Emissions Minimization Plan.
- 79. On August 22, 2023, AIR DISTRICT staff observed that RADIUS had a total of six (6) stationary FLIR infrared cameras: four (4) located at the shredded storage piles and two (2) located at the pre-shred infeed storage piles (with one aimed at the normal pre-shred tin/light iron scrap pile and one aimed at the pre-shred auto pile). None of these cameras were situated so as to monitor the alternatively located pre-shred tin/light iron ("alligator") pile that burned on August 9 and 10, 2023.

- 80. DEFENDANTS further violated AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6-4-301.1 by failing to store, in an easily accessible location onsite, fire suppression foam of the kind needed to treat metal fires, as required by the FACILITY's EMP and/or by the Oakland Fire Department.
- 81. DEFENDANTS also violated the EMP by failing to water the infeed materials pile that caught fire on August 9, 2023, as needed, during hours of operation leading up to the fire. DEFENDANTS failed to water the pile that caught fire for at least 2.5 hours before the initial ignition of the fire.
- 82. Upon information and belief, and likely to be supported by evidence at trial, had RADIUS complied with the strictures of its EMP by monitoring the pre-shed storage pile with FLIR cameras, storing usable firefighting foam onsite, watering the infeed materials storage pile, and minimizing the size of the infeed materials storage pile, as required, it would have prevented or substantially reduced the severity of the fire that erupted on August 9, 2023. DEFENDANTS' failures to comply with the EMP, in addition to failing to make personnel, water, and equipment available for responding to the fire, were all substantial factors in causing and prolonging the fire and consequent air pollutant emissions and nuisance conditions.
- 83. THE PEOPLE are informed and believe, and thereon allege, that DEFENDANTS failed to comply with the EMP in the manner and methods described herein on multiple days between the date when that EMP became effective (October 29, 2022) and the dates when the fire occurred (August 9-10, 2023), including but not limited to fifty-nine (59) separate days when RADIUS failed to comply with its EMP.

### C. Unlawful Emissions from the 2023 Fire

- 84. Burning metal scrap generates emissions of air pollutants including volatile organic compounds ("VOCs"), particulate matter ("PM"), carbon monoxide ("CO"), and other toxic air contaminants, depending on the material being burned.
- 85. AIR DISTRICT monitoring data shows that on August 9, 2023, hourly concentrations of PM sized 2.5 microns or smaller ("PM<sub>2.5</sub>") increased sharply from 3  $\mu$ g/m³ during the 5:00 p.m. hour to 266  $\mu$ g/m³ during the 6:00 p.m. hour at the Laney College monitoring site, downwind when the fire started. Hourly PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations increased at other AIR DISTRICT

# Facility Fires and Air Quality: PM<sub>2.5</sub> data from sensors

PM<sub>2.5</sub> data from lower-cost sensors helped illustrate the spatial extent of the smoke plume

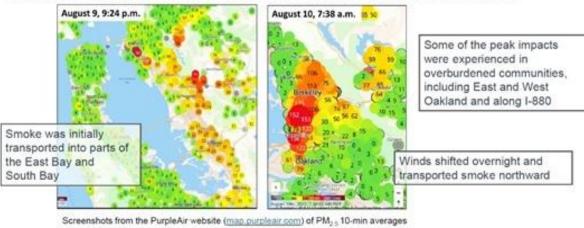


Figure 31

other monitoring sites on August 10, 2023, as winds shifted and transported smoke to additional locations. Peak hourly PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations on August 10, 2023, reached 94  $\mu$ g/m<sup>3</sup> at the Oakland – West monitoring site, 47  $\mu$ g/m<sup>3</sup> at the San Pablo monitoring site, 35  $\mu$ g/m<sup>3</sup> at the Pleasanton monitoring site, and 26  $\mu$ g/m<sup>3</sup> at the Livermore monitoring site.

87. PM<sub>2.5</sub> data are typically reported to the public using the Air Quality Index ("AQI"). The AQI relates concentrations of different pollutants to levels of health concern (good, moderate, unhealthy for sensitive groups, unhealthy, etc.) using a scale of 0 to 500 based on federal air quality standards. The AQI for PM<sub>2.5</sub> is based on a 24-hour, midnight-to-midnight average. Since a 24-hour, midnight-to-midnight average, is not available in real-time, real-time AQI levels for PM<sub>2.5</sub> are reported using the NowCast method developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Per AIR DISTRICT data, at the Laney College monitoring site, the NowCast PM<sub>2.5</sub> AQI increased from 19 during the 5:00 p.m. hour to 192 during the 6:00 p.m. hour on August 9, 2023. An AQI level between 151 and 200 corresponds to the "unhealthy" range on the AQI scale, and AQI levels remained in the "unhealthy" range at the Laney College monitoring site from the 6:00 p.m. hour through the 10:59 p.m. In addition, at the Oakland – East monitoring site, the NowCast PM<sub>2.5</sub> AQI levels reached 147 (which corresponds to the "unhealthy for sensitive groups" range) for the 9:00

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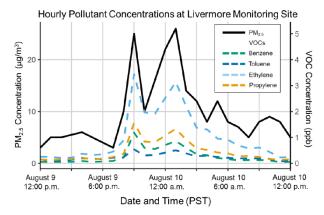
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p.m. hour on August 9, 2023. NowCast PM<sub>2.5</sub> AQI levels also reached 152 (in the "unhealthy" range) at the Oakland – West monitoring site for the 2:00 a.m. hour on August 10, 2023. Several other AIR DISTRICT monitoring sites, including Livermore, Pleasanton, and San Pablo had NowCast PM<sub>2.5</sub> AQI levels in the "moderate" range, on the evening of August 9, 2023, or the morning of August 10, 2023.

88. AIR DISTRICT monitoring data for speciated PM<sub>2.5</sub> on August 10, 2023, showed elevated levels of several metals, including lead, aluminum, zinc, and bromine, in particular at the Oakland – West monitoring site. In addition, AIR DISTRICT monitoring data for speciated VOCs at the Livermore monitoring site showed increases in concentrations of certain VOCs, including benzene, toluene, propylene, and ethylene, on the evening of August 9, 2023, and the morning of August 10, 2023, coincident with increases in PM<sub>2.5</sub>.

## Facility Fires and Air Quality: VOCs and Metals



In addition to elevated concentrations of PM, the smoke also contained:

- Elevated levels of several VOCs (see plot on left)
- Elevated levels of several metals, including lead, aluminum, zinc, and bromine

### Figure 43

- 89. It is therefore evident that communities throughout the Bay Area were exposed to elevated concentrations and unhealthy levels of toxic air contaminants in the form of particulate matter emitted from the fire. Such exposures are associated with adverse health effects, including but not limited to acute and chronic bronchitis, exacerbated asthma, emergency room visits, and respiratory symptoms.
- 90. A multitude of complainants reported experiencing acute symptoms from inhalation of the odors/smoke, including nausea, headaches, burning eyes, and throat irritation.

- 91. The high concentrations of air contaminants emitted by DEFENDANTS from the fire at RADIUS'S FACILITY caused significant community and public-health impacts, beyond those recorded in complaints and including, but not limited to, those endured by communities not near air monitoring stations.
- 92. Therefore, by igniting or creating the conditions that led to ignition of the 2023 fire, DEFENDANTS violated AIR DISTRICT Regulation 1-301 and Health and Safety Code section 41700, which prohibit DEFENDANTS from "discharg[ing] from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other material which cause injury, detriment, nuisance or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or the public; or which endangers the comfort, repose, health or safety of any such persons or the public, or which causes, or has a natural tendency to cause, injury or damage to business or property."
- 93. During the fire, AIR DISTRICT staff, certified in plume evaluations, evaluated the visible emissions emanating from the fire, and documented eleven (11) consecutive minutes of visible emissions as dark as No. 5 on the Ringelmann scale, the equivalent of 100% opacity.
- 94. DEFENDANTS therefore violated AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6-1-301, which prohibits DEFENDANTS from "emit[ing] from any source for a period or aggregate periods of more than three minutes in any hour, a visible emission that is as dark or darker than No. 1 on the Ringelmann Chart, or of such opacity as to obscure an observer's view to an equivalent or greater degree."

### D. The AIR DISTRICT'S Issuance of Notices of Violation to DEFENDANTS

- 95. As a result of the above acts and omissions, the AIR DISTRICT issued three (3) Notices of Violation to RADIUS for the fire and for its operations related thereto, citing violations of four separate regulatory requirements.
- 96. Because the fire created a public nuisance, the AIR DISTRICT issued Notice of Violation No. 61931 on October 10, 2023, for violations of AIR DISTRICT Regulation 1-301 and Health and Safety Code § 41700.
- 97. Because DEFENDANTS ignited, caused to be ignited, permitted ignition, and/or allowed a prohibited fire at the FACILITY, and because DEFEDANTS created smoke exceeding

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the visible emissions limits allowed by applicable regulations, the AIR DISTRICT issued Notice of Violation No. 61932, dated August 10, 2023, citing two separate violations, one for the illegal fire in violation of AIR DISTRICT Regulation 5-301, and one violation for exceeding opacity limits in violation of AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6-1-301.

98. Because DEFENDANTS failed to follow the FACILITY's EMP by not maintaining and operating FLIR cameras at the infeed shredder pile that ignited on August 9, 2023, by not complying with pile watering requirements and frequency intervals, and by failing to store onsite fire suppressant foam appropriate for the type of fire occurring on August 9 and 10, 2023, and useful for firefighting by the Oakland Fire Department, the AIR DISTRICT issued Notice of Violation No. 62739, dated September 14, 2023, for violation of AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6-4-301.1.

### **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

Negligent Emissions of Air Contaminants Causing a Public Nuisance Health & Safety Code section 41700 and AIR DISTRICT Regulation 1-301 Penalties Pursuant to Health & Safety Code Sections 42402.1(a), 42402(b)(1), 42402(a), and 42411

- 99. THE PEOPLE re-allege and incorporate by reference the above paragraphs, as though fully set forth herein.
- 100. DEFENDANTS, and each of them, negligently emitted air contaminants in violation of Health & Safety Code section 41700 and AIR DISTRICT Regulation 1-301, by causing or otherwise creating and allowing for the conditions to cause a fire on August 9, 2023, which continued to burn on August 10, 2023, and which, by burning scrap metal and other materials, emitted dangerous quantities of air contaminants into the surrounding communities, thereby creating and constituting a public nuisance within the confines of Health & Safety Code section 41700 and AIR DISTRICT Regulation 1-301. These violations lasted for two days, from August 9 to August 10, 2023, and impacted a considerable number of persons.
- 101. DEFENDANTS knew of the flammability of the materials stored at the FACILITY by virtue of previous fires in August 2018 and July 2020, among other reasons. DEFENDANTS acted negligently by: accepting and/or purchasing additional recyclable and recoverable metal even after the metal shredder at the FACILITY had been shut down; failing to install, maintain, and/or operate stationary and handheld FLIR cameras at the infeed materials pile that ignited on August 9, 2023, as

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required by the EMP; failing to store onsite fire suppression foam usable for responding to metal fires; failing to limit pile size; and failing to water the alligator pile after 3:00 p.m. on August 9, among other acts and omissions. All of the foregoing acts and omissions alleged in this cause of action demonstrate DEFENDANTS deviated from their standard of care (e.g., the EMP), and their acts and omissions were a substantial factor in creating the conditions that proximately caused the fire, emissions, and the ensuing public nuisance across multiple Bay Area communities

- 102. As a result, DEFENDANTS, and each of them, negligently emitted air contaminants in violation of state law and AIR DISTRICT regulations.
- 103. DEFENDANTS are therefore liable for a civil penalty of up to \$31,375 per violation per day pursuant to Health & Safety Code sections 42402.1(a) and 42411.
- 104. In the alternative, to the extent that DEFENDANTS are not liable under Health and Safety Code section 42402.1(a) for the negligent emission of air contaminants, DEFENDANTS are strictly liable for a civil penalty of up to \$12,550 per violation per day pursuant to Health and Safety Code sections 42402(b)(1) and 42411, since DEFENDANTS, and each of them, engaged in acts and omissions in violation of Health & Safety Code section 41700 and AIR DISTRICT Regulation 1-301 by causing or otherwise creating and allowing for the conditions to cause a fire on August 9, 2023, which continued to burn on August 10, 2023, and which, by burning scrap metal and other materials, emitted dangerous quantities of air contaminants into the surrounding communities, thereby creating and constituting a public nuisance within the confines of Health & Safety Code section 41700 and AIR DISTRICT Regulation 1-301.
- 105. Finally, and in the alternative, to the extent that DEFENDANTS are not liable under either Health and Safety Code section 42402.1(a) for the negligent emission of air contaminants or Health and Safety Code section 42402(b)(1) for violation AIR DISTRICT rules and regulations, DEFENDANTS are liable for a civil penalty of up to \$6,275 per violation per day pursuant to Health and Safety Code sections 42402(a) and 42411 since DEFENDANTS, and each of them, engaged in acts and omissions in violation of Health & Safety Code section 41700 and AIR DISTRICT Regulation 1-301 by causing or otherwise creating and allowing for the conditions to cause a fire on August 9, 2023, which continued to burn on August 10, 2023, and which, by burning

scrap metal, emitted dangerous quantities of air contaminants into the surrounding communities, thereby creating and constituting a public nuisance within the confines of Health & Safety Code section 41700 and AIR DISTRICT Regulation 1-301.

### SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

Negligent Emissions of Dark Smoke AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6-1-301

Penalties Pursuant to Health & Safety Code Sections 42402.1(a), 42402(b)(1), 42402(a), and 42411

- 106. THE PEOPLE re-allege and incorporate by reference the above paragraphs, as though fully set forth herein.
- 107. DEFENDANTS, and each of them, negligently emitted air contaminants in violation of AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6-1-301 by emitting visible emissions (smoke) on August 9, 2023, and continuing into August 10, 2023, that were "darker than No. 1 on the Ringelmann Chart, or of such opacity as to obscure an observer's view to an equivalent or greater degree," for a period of longer than three minutes.
- 108. DEFENDANTS are therefore liable for a civil penalty of up to \$31,375 per violation per day pursuant to Health & Safety Code sections 42402.1(a) and 42411.
- 109. In the alternative, to the extent that DEFENDANTS are not liable under Health and Safety Code section 42402.1(a) for the negligent emission of air contaminants, DEFENDANTS are strictly liable for a civil penalty of up to \$12,550 per violation per day pursuant to Health and Safety Code sections 42402(b)(1) and 42411 since DEFENDANTS, and each of them, violated AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6-1-301 by emitting visible emissions (smoke) on August 9, 2023, and continuing into August 10, 2023, that were "darker than No. 1 on the Ringelmann Chart, or of such opacity as to obscure an observer's view to an equivalent or greater degree," for a period of longer than three minutes.
- 110. Finally, and in the alternative, to the extent that DEFENDANTS are not liable under either Health and Safety Code section 42402.1(a) for the negligent emission of air contaminants or Health and Safety Code section 42402(b)(1) for violation AIR DISTRICT rules and regulations, DEFENDANTS are strictly liable for a civil penalty of up to \$6,275 per violation per day pursuant to Health and Safety Code sections 42402(a) and 42411 since DEFENDANTS, and each of them,

violated AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6-1-301 by emitting visible emissions (smoke) on August 9, 2023, and continuing into August 10, 2023, that were "darker than No. 1 on the Ringelmann Chart, or of such opacity as to obscure an observer's view to an equivalent or greater degree," for a period of longer than three minutes.

### **THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION**

Negligent Emissions of Air Contaminants From a Prohibited Fire
AIR DISTRICT Regulation 5-301
Penalties Pursuant to Health & Safety Code Sections 42402.1(a), 42402(b)(1), 42402(a), and 42411

- 111. THE PEOPLE re-allege and incorporate by reference the above paragraphs, as though fully set forth herein.
- 112. DEFENDANTS, and each of them, negligently emitted air contaminants in violation of AIR DISTRICT Regulation 5-301, which prohibits "ignit[ing], caus[ing] to be ignited, permit[ting] to be ignited, [and/or] allow[ing] ... a[] fire[] within the District" that was not permitted under AIR DISTRICT Regulations.
- 113. DEFENDANTS negligently emitted these air contaminants in violation of Regulation 5-301 on August 9 and 10, 2023.
- 114. DEFENDANTS are therefore liable for a civil penalty of up to \$31,375 per violation per day pursuant to Health & Safety Code sections 42402.1(a) and 42411.
- 115. In the alternative, to the extent that DEFENDANTS are not liable under Health and Safety Code section 42402.1(a) for the negligent emission of air contaminants, DEFENDANTS are strictly liable for a civil penalty of up to \$12,550 per violation per day pursuant to Health and Safety Code sections 42402(b)(1) and 42411 since DEFENDANTS, and each of them, violated AIR DISTRICT Regulation 5-301 by "ignit[ing], caus[ing] to be ignited, permit[ting] to be ignited, [and/or] allow[ing] ... a[] fire[] within the District" that was not permitted under AIR DISTRICT Regulations.
- 116. Finally, and in the alternative, to the extent that DEFENDANTS are not liable under either Health and Safety Code section 42402.1(a) for the negligent emission of air contaminants or Health and Safety Code section 42402(b)(1) for violation AIR DISTRICT rules and regulations, DEFENDANTS are strictly liable for a civil penalty of up to \$6,275 per violation per day pursuant to

Health and Safety Code sections 42402(a) and 42411 since DEFENDANTS, and each of them, violated AIR DISTRICT Regulation 5-301 by "ignit[ing], caus[ing] to be ignited, permit[ting] to be ignited, [and/or] allow[ing] ... a[] fire[] within the District" that was not permitted under AIR DISTRICT Regulations.

### **FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

Violations of Emissions Minimization Plan Pursuant to AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6-1-301 Penalties Pursuant to Health & Safety Code Sections 42402(b)(1), 42402(a), and 42411

- 117. THE PEOPLE re-allege and incorporate by reference the above paragraphs, as though fully set forth herein.
- DISTRICT Regulation 6-4-301 by violating the FACILITY's EMP by failing to install, maintain, and/or operate stationary and handheld FLIR cameras at the infeed shredder "alligator" pile that ignited on August 9, 2023, by failing to store onsite firefighting foam usable for responding to metal fires, by neglecting to adequately and timely water the pre-shed infeed materials pile, and by failing to minimize the size of the pre-shed storage pile, as required (among other violations). THE PEOPLE are informed and believe and thereon allege that such violations occurred on multiple separate days between the date on which the EMP became effective (October 29, 2022) and the days on which the fire occurred (August 9-10, 2023), including, but not limited to, fifty-nine (59) days.
- 119. DEFENDANTS are therefore strictly liable for a civil penalty of up to \$12,550 per violation per day pursuant to Health & Safety Code Sections 42402(b)(1) and 42411.
- 120. In the alternative, to the extent that DEFENDANTS are not liable under Health and Safety Code section 42402(b)(1), DEFENDANTS are strictly liable for a civil penalty of up to \$6,275 per violation per day pursuant to Health and Safety Code sections 42402(a) and 42411 since DEFENDANTS, and each of them, violated AIR DISTRICT Regulation 6-4-301 by violating the FACILITY's EMP by failing to install, maintain, and/or operate stationary and handheld FLIR cameras at the infeed shredder pile that ignited on August 9, 2023, by failing to store onsite firefighting foam usable for responding to scrap metal fires, by neglecting to adequately and timely water the pre-shed infeed materials pile, and by failing to minimize the size of the pre-shed storage pile, as required (among other violations). THE PEOPLE are informed and believe and thereon allege

1 that such violations occurred many days between the date on which the EMP became effective 2 (October 29, 2022) and the days on which the fire occurred (August 9-10, 2023), including but not 3 limited to fifty-nine (59) days. 4 **FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION** Public Nuisance 5 Civil Code section 3479 and 3480 [DISTRICT ATTORNEY only] 6 The DISTRICT ATTORNEY re-alleges and incorporates by reference the above 7 121. 8 paragraphs, as though fully set forth herein. 9 122. The DISTRICT ATTORNEY alleges that DEFENDANTS have engaged in, and continue to engage in, acts or practices that cause air contaminants to be released in the community 10 11 or neighborhood outside the FACILITY. These releases are a threat to the public health and safety and to the environment and constitute a public nuisance. 12 123. Injunctive relief is warranted to prevent ongoing and future violations by 13 DEFENDANTS. 14 SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION 15 Violations of the Unfair Competition Law 16 Business and Professions Code section 17200 et seq. [DISTRICT ATTORNEY only] 17 The DISTRICT ATTORNEY re-alleges and incorporates by reference the above 124. 18 19 paragraphs, as though fully set forth herein. 125. The DISTRICT ATTORNEY alleges that DEFENDANTS have engaged in, and 20 continue to engage in, acts or practices that constitute unfair competition within the meaning of 21 22 Business and Professions Code sections 17200 through 17208, including but not limited to, the acts, omissions or practices alleged in the First through Fifth Causes of Action, above. 23 126. Said violations render DEFENDANTS liable for civil penalties not to exceed \$2,500 24 for each violation, cumulative to all other remedies. 25 127. Injunctive relief is warranted to prevent future UCL violations by DEFENDANTS. 26 27 PRAYER FOR RELIEF WHEREFORE, THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA ex rel. BAY AREA 28

AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT and URSULA JONES DICKSON, ALAMEDA 2 COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY, PRAY FOR JUDGMENT AGAINST DEFENDANTS, AND 3 EACH DEFENDANT, GRANTING THE FOLLOWING RELIEF: 4 1. DEFENDANTS, and each of them, be assessed, and THE PEOPLE recover, the 5 maximum civil penalties for the violations of the Health and Safety Code provisions and Air District regulations alleged above, or in another amount, according to proof presented at trial; 6 7 2. DEFENDANTS, and each of them, be assessed, and THE PEOPLE ex rel. URSULA 8 JONES DICKSON, ALAMEDA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY recover, the maximum civil 9 penalties for the violations of the UCL alleged above, or in another amount, according to proof 10 presented at trial; 11 3. DEFENDANTS, and each of them, be enjoined and prohibited from storing shredder infeed materials at the FACILITY in areas without appropriate and adequate fire prevention and 12 13 suppression measures including regular watering, coverage by water cannons and monitoring by 14 FLIR cameras; 15 4. DEFENDANTS, and each of them, be enjoined and prohibited from causing a public 16 nuisance and/or engaging in unlawful, unfair or fraudulent business practices; 17 5. DEFENDANTS, and each of them, be assessed, and Plaintiffs THE PEOPLE OF 18 THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA ex rel. BAY AREA AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT 19 and URSULA JONES DICKSON, ALAMEDA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY be awarded, 20 their costs of suit herein, including, without limitation, costs of litigation; and 21 6. Such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper. 22 /// 23 /// 24 /// 25 /// 26 /// 27 /// 28

1		Respectfully submitted,
2	Dated: <u>July 17, 2025</u>	
3		
4	BAY AREA AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT	URSULA JONES DICKSON ALAMEDA COUNTY DISTRICT
5 6	ALEXANDRA KAMEL	ATTORNEY  Signed by:
7 8	Senior Assistant Counsel MARCIA RAYMOND Assistant Counsel	By:Andres Perez
9	AQUA TERRIS AERIS LAW GROUP	Huy Luong
10		Attorneys for Plaintiff The People of the State of California
11 12	By: Matthew C. Maclear Harrison M. Beck	ex rel. Ursula Jones Dickson, Alameda County District Attorney
13	Attorneys for Plaintiff The People of the State of California ex rel. Bay Area Air Quality Management	
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16		
17	Note: Pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure sect	ion 446(a), when a district, prosecutor, or public
18	B agency is a plaintiff in a civil complaint, the ans	
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