

**DOCKETED**

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<b>Project Title:</b>	Settlement Agreements
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<b>Document Title:</b>	Berlin Brands Group Incorporated Settlement Agreement and Release
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<b>Organization:</b>	California Energy Commission
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## SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND RELEASE

SW  
19/20  
This Settlement Agreement and Release (Agreement) is entered into between the California Energy Commission (CEC), with its principal office at 1516 Ninth Street, Sacramento, California 95814, and Berlin Brands Group, Incorporated (Berlin Brands), with a place of business at 101 Montgomery Street #2050, San Francisco, California 94104, collectively referred to as the Parties.

### I. RECITALS

- (1) CEC's Appliance Efficiency Regulations at California Code of Regulations, Title 20, Article 4, sections 1601-1609 (Appliance Efficiency Regulations),<sup>1</sup> set forth the requirements to sell or offer for sale regulated appliances in California. The pertinent requirements include:
  - Testing: The appliance is tested as required in section 1603, using the applicable test method set forth in section 1604.
  - Efficiency: The appliance meets the required efficiency standards set forth in sections 1605.2 or 1605.3.
  - Marking: The appliance is correctly marked and labeled as required under section 1607.
  - Certification: The appliance is certified to CEC and appears in CEC's most recent Modernized Appliance Efficiency Database System (MAEDbS) as required under section 1606.
- (2) CEC's enforcement authority includes the removal of non-complying appliances from MAEDbS, as set forth in section 1608, and the issuance of administrative civil penalties under section 1609.
- (3) Berlin Brands distributes and markets several models of Klarstein brand wine coolers, evaporative coolers, range hoods, and cordless rechargeable vacuum cleaners containing a small battery charger system (SBCS), that it sells or offers for sale in California either directly or through retailers or distributors.
- (4) Klarstein wine coolers, evaporative coolers, range hoods, and cordless vacuum cleaners are subject to the testing, efficiency, marking, and certification requirements for this appliance class as described in paragraph I(1) above.
- (5) From July 2015 to September 2019, Berlin Brands sold or offered for sale through retailers or distributors wine coolers, evaporative coolers, range hoods, and cordless vacuum cleaners in California that were not listed in MAEDbS as required in section 1606.
- (6) Based on the above Recitals, CEC, through adjudication, could impose penalties for each violation alleged, obtain injunctive relief to prohibit Berlin Brands from continuing to sell or offer for sale non-compliant wine coolers, evaporative coolers, range hoods, and cordless vacuum cleaners in

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<sup>1</sup> All references are to California Code of Regulations, Title 20, Article 4, unless otherwise specified.

California, and take any other enforcement action as allowed by law.

(7) Section 1609(b)(3) and California Public Resources Code section 25402.11(a)(2) identify the following factors CEC shall consider when determining the amount of an administrative civil penalty:

- The nature and seriousness of the violation.
- The persistence of the violation, meaning a responsible person's history of past violations of the Appliance Efficiency Regulations over the previous seven years.
- The number of violations arising from the course of conduct that is subject of the enforcement proceeding.
- The length of time over which the violation occurred.
- The willfulness of the persons responsible for the violation.
- The harm to consumers and to the state that resulted from the amount of energy wasted due to the violation.
- The number of persons responsible for the violation.
- The efforts of the persons responsible for the violation to correct the violation prior to initiation of an enforcement action by CEC.
- The cooperation, by the persons responsible for the violation, with CEC during its investigation.
- The assets, liabilities, and net worth of the persons responsible for the violation. This information will be considered to reduce the administrative civil penalty amount, should a responsible person or persons elect to provide asset, liability, and net worth documentation to the Executive Director to demonstrate that a reduction in a penalty amount is necessary to avoid an undue burden.

(8) Penalties must be set at levels sufficient to deter violations. In developing this Agreement CEC considered the facts of the case and applied the above factors to determine an appropriate settlement. Further, in this case Berlin Brands cooperated with CEC in the investigation by removing the non-compliant units from the California market; and by providing to CEC sales data of non-compliant units. The efforts by Berlin Brands saved CEC time and resources in investigating the violations and minimized the impacts on the competitive business environment in California, from the non-compliant units.

(9) Berlin Brands is willing to enter into this Agreement solely for the purpose of settlement and resolution of this matter with CEC. CEC accepts this Agreement in termination of this matter. Accordingly, the Parties agree to resolve this matter completely by means of this Agreement, without the need for adjudication.

## **II. TERMS AND RELEASE**

In consideration of the Recitals listed above which are incorporated into this section by reference, and the mutual agreements set forth below, CEC and Berlin Brands agree as follows:

- (1) This Agreement covers the Berlin Brands wine cooler, evaporative cooler, range hood, and cordless vacuum cleaner model numbers listed in Attachment A.
- (2) For selling or offering for sale in California, wine coolers, evaporative coolers, range hoods, and cordless vacuum cleaners identified in paragraph I(5), whose model numbers are identified in Attachment A, that were not certified to MAEDbS as required by section 1606, and, in consideration of the factors listed in paragraph I(7) and I(8) above, Berlin Brands shall pay as an administrative civil penalty the total sum of \$38,115.00. Payment shall be made by check payable to the California Energy Commission, in two monthly payments as shown below:

<b>Payment Number</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Amount</b>
1	June 15, 2020	\$19,057.00
2	July 15, 2020	\$19,058.00

Payment shall be made by the applicable due date, and sent with the corresponding remittance statement to the following address:

California Energy Commission  
Accounting Office, MS-2  
1516 Ninth Street  
Sacramento, California 95814-5512


Effect of untimely payment: If any payment is more than 15 days late, the entire remaining balance becomes immediately due and payable. In addition, if CEC takes action to enforce this Agreement, Berlin Brands shall pay all costs of investigating and prosecuting the action, including expert fees, reasonable attorney's fees, and costs.

It is agreed that if Berlin Brands including its subsidiary or parent company, at any time becomes insolvent, or makes an assignment for the benefit of creditors or similar action adversely involving Berlin Brands, its subsidiary, or parent company, or a proceeding or petition under any bankruptcy, reorganization, arrangement of debt, insolvency, readjustment of debt, or receivership law or statute is filed by or against Berlin Brands, its subsidiary, or parent company, or a trustee in bankruptcy, custodian, receiver or agent is appointed or authorized to take charge of any of Berlin Brands's, its subsidiary's, or parent company's properties, or if any deposit account or other property of Berlin Brands's, its subsidiary, or parent company be attempted to be obtained or held by writ of execution, garnishment, attachment, condemnation, levy, forfeiture or other legal process, or Berlin Brands, its subsidiary, or parent company takes any action to authorize any of the foregoing, the entire remaining balance becomes immediately due and payable without notice or demand.

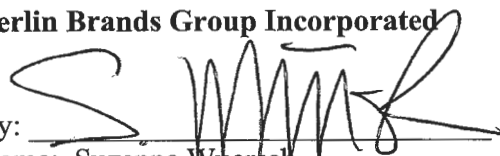
- (3) Berlin Brands also agrees to take each of the following actions for any and all regulated appliance it will sell or offer for sale in California:
- a. Test all basic models, utilizing the applicable test method, to ensure conformance with the Appliance Efficiency Regulations.
  - b. Certify all basic models in MAEDbS, and ensure listings are kept current and up to date.
  - c. Add the required marking to the unit.
- (4) This Agreement shall apply to and be binding upon Berlin Brands and its principals, officers, directors, receivers, trustees, employees, successors and assignees, subsidiary and parent corporations, and upon CEC and any successor agency that may have responsibility for and jurisdiction over the subject matter of this Agreement.
- (5) In consideration of the payment specified above, CEC hereby releases Berlin Brands and its parent corporation, principals, directors, officers, agents, employees, shareholders, subsidiaries, predecessors, and successors from any and all claims for violations of section 1608 (efficiency, marking, certification), relating to the appliances and time period identified in paragraph I(5), whose model numbers are identified in Attachment A.
- (6) This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement and understanding between CEC and Berlin Brands concerning the claims and settlement in this Agreement, and this Agreement fully supersedes and replaces any and all prior negotiations and agreement of any kind or nature, whether written or oral, between CEC and Berlin Brands concerning these claims.
- (7) No agreement to modify, amend, extend, supersede, terminate, or discharge this Agreement, or any portion thereof, shall be valid or enforceable unless it is in writing and signed by all Parties to this Agreement.
- (8) Berlin Brands further agrees that if the subject matter of this Agreement comes before CEC in an administrative adjudication, neither any member of CEC, nor the Executive Director, shall be disqualified because of prior consideration of this Agreement.
- (9) Each Party to this Agreement has reviewed the Agreement independently, has had the opportunity to consult counsel, is fully informed of the terms and effect of this Agreement, and has not relied in any way on any inducement, representation, or advice of any other Party in deciding to enter into this Agreement.
- (10) This Agreement shall be interpreted and enforced in accordance with the laws of the State of California, without regard to California's choice of law rules. Any litigation arising out of or related to this Agreement shall be filed in the Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento.

- (11) Each provision of this Agreement is severable, and in the event that any provision of this Agreement is held to be invalid or unenforceable, the remainder of this Agreement remains in full force and effect.
- (12) The failure of any Party to enforce any provision of this Agreement shall not be construed as a waiver of any such provision, nor prevent such Party thereafter from enforcing such provision or any other provision of this Agreement.
- (13) This Agreement is deemed to have been drafted equally by the Parties; it will not be interpreted for or against either Party on the ground that said Party drafted it.
- (14) This Agreement is effective upon signature by a representative of Berlin Brands with authority to bind the company, and signature by the Executive Director of CEC. The Parties agree that fax or scanned signatures and multiple signature pages are acceptable for purposes of executing this Agreement, which may be signed in counterparts.

**California Energy Commission**

By:   
Name: Drew Bohan  
Title: Executive Director  
Date: 6/15/2020

**Berlin Brands Group Incorporated**

By:   
Name: Suzanne Wuersch  
Title: President  
Date: 6/15/2020

## Attachment A

### Wine Cooler Models

10005400	10028011	10030496
10011580	10029825	10030713
10027673	10027673	10031694
10032008		

### Evaporative Cooler Model

10032337

### Range Hood Models

10022115	10022116	10027565	10027566
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### Cordless Vacuum Cleaner Models

10032354	10032355	10032649
10032648		