

NEWS RELEASE

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California Hotel & Lodging Association Helps Lodging Guests Understand Proposition 65 *Court Approval Obtained for Comprehensive Compliance Procedure*

SACRAMENTO – Culminating several years of work, the California Hotel & Lodging Association (**CH&LA**) has obtained court approval of a comprehensive compliance procedure which will provide hotel guests and patrons throughout California useful information about exposures to chemicals listed under Proposition 65. Adopted by the voters in 1986, Proposition 65 requires certain business owners to notify individuals prior to “knowingly and intentionally” exposing them to chemicals “known to the State of California” to cause cancer, birth defects or reproductive harm.

Until now, businesses throughout California have been posting warning signs whenever exposure to one of Proposition 65’s hundreds of chemicals would occur – however, these generic, “safe harbor” warning signs do not tell consumers much of anything about the nature of the potential exposure(s) in question.

“Unfortunately, the ‘safe harbor’ warning-sign language specified under Proposition 65 is designed to be so all-encompassing that it is vague and typically doesn’t provide much useful information,” said Jim Abrams, president and CEO of CH&LA. “People see Prop. 65 warning signs nearly every place they go – grocery and hardware stores, restaurants, commercial buildings, car show rooms, hotels and inns, pretty much everywhere – but the so-called ‘approved’ signs don’t provide the information people need to make important decisions about their own health. If a business wants to provide helpful information on the signs, there is a great deal of legal uncertainty whether this is permissible. This uncertainty frustrated us, and we wanted to change that as far as hotels are concerned.”

CH&LA worked for a long time to develop a warning sign that will be posted outside every primary entrance into hotels and tell everyone entering the establishment that there is a brochure available at the front desk that will provide them with information about specific exposures potentially encountered in lodging establishments. This compliance mechanism was recently approved by the Superior Court in Los Angeles.

“The key is the informational brochure that hotels will have available to people who enter the property,” said Abrams. “The brochure describes various types of Prop. 65 chemicals found at a hotel that require a warning. CH&LA will periodically update the brochure, and people entering a hotel will now have access to useful information instead of just a scary or meaningless warning sign.”

Abrams went on to explain that some well intentioned laws, such as Proposition 65, can become so complicated that they create as many problems as they solve. For example, Prop. 65 not only left businesses uncertain about how to comply and consumers in the dark about chemical risks, but it has also been exploited by certain groups and their lawyers who file frivolous lawsuits that cost California businesses millions – thereby increasing consumer prices and further damaging the state’s struggling business climate. “Our intent was to help protect hotel guests and operators – and I believe that we have achieved that goal,” said Abrams.

The California Hotel & Lodging Association (CH&LA) is the largest state lodging industry trade association in the country. Its 1,400 member properties, which comprise close to 170,000 guest rooms, consist of hotels, motels, bed and breakfast inns, guest ranches, resorts, spas, condominium rentals, timeshares, and vacation home rentals located throughout California. CH&LA’s mission is to be the indispensable resource for communicating and protecting the rights and interests of the California lodging industry, for providing educational training and value programs for all segments of the industry, and for supporting strategic alliances to promote the value of California tourism and travel. Sacramento-based CH&LA has been representing California’s lodging industry for more than a century. CH&LA is on the web at www.chlaonline.com.

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