COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES; DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

- 1. The entirety of this Complaint is pled upon information and belief. Each allegation is likely to have evidentiary support after a reasonable opportunity for further investigation or discovery.
- 2. Plaintiff DANIEL ESTRADA purchased food and drink manufactured and sold by defendant SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, and SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., at its 205 N. 4th Street location in San Jose, California. After consuming the food, plaintiff became sick. The food that defendant SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, and SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., sold to plaintiff was contaminated by *Shigella* bacteria, causing his illness and injuries described below.

## **PARTIES**

- 3. At the time of the subject incident giving rise to his claims, DANIEL ESTRADA lived in the City of San Jose, in the County of Santa Clara, California.
- 4. Defendant SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, and SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., is a California company with its principal place of business located at 205 North 4th Street, San Jose, CA 95112. At all times relevant to this action, SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, and SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., manufactured and sold food products within the State of California.

## **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

## Shigella

- 5. Shigella is a bacterium that can cause sudden and severe diarrhea (gastroenteritis) in humans. Shigellosis is the name of the disease that Shigella causes. The illness is also known as "bacillary dysentery." Shigella bacteria can infect the intestinal tract after the ingestion of relatively few organisms. This is why shigellosis is the most communicable of the bacterial-induced diarrheas.
- 6. Shigella infection can be subclinical, but typically causes watery or bloody diarrhea with abdominal pain, fever, tenesmus, and malaise. Shigella is very infectious with just 10 -100 organisms are sufficient to cause disease. Transmission occurs via the fecal oral route and can be spread by eating food prepared by an infected food handler or by direct person to person contact. Sexual transmission may

## Daniel Estrada's Illness

- 10. Daniel Estrada purchased and consumed food at the defendants' restaurant located at 205 N. 4th Street, San Jose, California, on or about Saturday, October 17, 2015.
- 11. During the day on Monday, October 19, 2015, Mr. Estrada began to experience body aches. He believed that he was becoming ill with a common flu. Late that same night, however, he began

also occur. Young children, the elderly, and HIV – infected individuals with CD4 count < 200 are more likely to have severe symptoms including dehydration, bacteremia, and seizures.

7. The source of *Shigella* bacteria is the excrement (feces) of an infected individual that is ultimately ingested by another person. The infectious material is spread to new cases by person-to-person contact or via contaminated food or water. Approximately 20% of the nearly 450,000 cases of shigellosis that occur annually in the U.S are foodborne-related. Generally, the food preparer is the individual who contaminates the food, but food may also become contaminated during processing. Contamination of drinking water by *Shigella* is a problem that more often occurs in the developing world, but swimming pools and beaches in the U.S. can become contaminated by infected individuals. No group of individuals is immune to shigellosis, but certain individuals are at increased risk, particularly small children. Persons infected with HIV experience shigellosis much more commonly than other individuals.

## Shigella Outbreak at Marisco's San Juan Restaurant

- 8. According to a Public Health Warning, on Saturday afternoon, October 17, 2015, the Santa Clara County Public Health Department was notified by a local hospital of 5 patients with fever and diarrhea who had all eaten at the same restaurant. Subsequent case finding has revealed a total of over two dozen individuals with fever and diarrhea who ate at Mariscos San Juan restaurant (205 N. 4th Street) in downtown San Jose on Friday October 16 or Saturday October 17. The restaurant was closed on the morning of Sunday, October 18, 2015 and remains closed.
- 9. Of the ill persons, over a dozen have tested positive for *Shigella* by PCR, and one has a blood culture growing *Shigella sonnei*; almost all of the reported cases have required hospital admission, and 12 are in intensive care. There are other individuals who were seen and not admitted or who were ill but did not seek medical attention. The number of ill individuals sickened in this outbreak has reached at least 93.

to experience severe gastrointestinal symptoms, including chills, fever, diarrhea and abdominal cramps.

- 12. On Tuesday morning, October 20, Mr. Estrada saw his primary physician, who directed him to get to the emergency department (ED) at Good Samaritan hospital immediately for treatment. The physician called the ED, and ED personnel were waiting for Mr. Estrada to assist him when he arrived. At the ED over the course of the day, Mr. Estrada was treated with antibiotics and intravenous fluids for his severe dehydration. He was kept isolated, given his likely infectious state, until the time of discharge around 5:00 PM the same day.
- 13. Since being discharged, Mr. Estrada continues to suffer from the effects of his Shigellosis illness, which was proximately caused by his consumption of *Shigella*-contaminated food manufactured and sold by the defendants on October 17, 2015.

# FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION NEGLIGENCE

(Against Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20)

- 14. By this reference, paragraphs 1 through 13 of this Complaint are fully incorporated as if each and every one of these paragraphs was set forth here in its entirety.
- 15. Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 were negligent in manufacturing, distributing and selling food products that were not reasonably safe because adequate warnings or instructions were not provided, including but not limited to the warning that the food product may contain *Shigella*, and thus should not be given to, or consumed by, people.
- 16. Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 had a duty to comply with all statutory and regulatory provisions that pertained or applied to the manufacture, distribution, storage, labeling, and sale of food products, including, but not limited to, California's Sherman Food, Drug and Cosmetic Laws and the California Health and Safety Code, which bans the manufacture, sale and distribution of any "adulterated" food. Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 failed to do so. Plaintiff was among the class of persons

designed to be protected by the statutory and regulatory provisions pertaining to the defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20's manufacture, distribution, storage, labeling and sale of their food.

- 17. Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 had a duty to use supplies and/or raw materials in producing the food product which were in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, ordinances and regulations, which were from safe and reliable sources, which were clean, wholesome and free from spoilage and adulteration, and which were safe for human consumption, but failed to do so. Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 also had a duty to consumers of their products to produce their products using reasonable care, but breached this duty as well.
- 18. Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 were negligent in the selection of their material and ingredient suppliers, or other subcontractors, and failed to adequately supervise them, or provide them with adequate standards in writing, and as a result, purchased and used products contaminated with *Shigella*.
- 19. More specifically, defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 owed a duty to properly supervise, train, and monitor their employees, or the employees of their agents or subcontractors, in the preparation of the products it sold, doing so to ensure compliance with the each defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20's own specifications and performance standards, as well as to ensure compliance with all applicable health regulations, including the FDA's Good Manufacturing Practices regulations, 21 C.F.R. Part 110, Subparts (A)-(G). Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 breached all of these duties, and plaintiff was

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injured as a direct and proximate result of such breaches.

- Under applicable state law, food is adulterated if it contains a "poisonous or deleterious 20. substance which may render it injurious to health." Shigella is such a substance. Thus, by either manufacture, distribution, storage, or sale of the subject product or the subject product's ingredients, defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 breached their statutory and regulatory duties, and plaintiff was injured as a direct and proximate result of such breaches.
- 21. Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 breached the aforementioned duties as alleged above, which breach constituted the proximate cause of injury to the plaintiff.
- 22. As a result of the defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20's negligence, the plaintiff suffered severe and permanent personal injuries, as well as economic loss.
- 23. The plaintiff has suffered general and special, incidental and consequential damages, as the direct and proximate result of the acts and/or omissions of defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 as set forth above, which damages shall be fully proven at the time of trial, including, but not limited to, damages for loss of enjoyment of life, both past and future; medical and medical related expenses, both past and future; wage and economic loss, past and future; emotional distress, and future emotional distress; medical and pharmaceutical expenses, past and future; and other ordinary, incidental and consequential damages as would be anticipated to arise under the circumstances.

Wherefore, Plaintiff DANIEL ESTRADA prays for judgment against Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20, as set forth below.

## SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

STRICT LIABILITY CLAIM – Violation of California's Sherman Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Laws, California Health and Safety Code § 109875, et seq.

(Against Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20)

- 24. By this reference, paragraphs 1 through 23 of this Complaint are fully incorporated as if each and every one of these paragraphs was set forth here in its entirety.
- 25. Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba
  MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 are in the business
  of manufacturing and selling food and drink products, including the contaminated food product that is at
  issue herein.
- 26. Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 manufactured and sold food that was defective at the time it left defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20's control in that it was contaminated with *Shigella*, which rendered it adulterated, unwholesome and injurious to health and unfit for human consumption. This defective condition created an unreasonable risk to people such as the plaintiff.
- 27. Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba
  MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 sold the food
  products used by plaintiff knowing the products would be used by plaintiff without inspection for defects.
- 28. It was reasonably foreseeable to defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 that the contaminated food, when put to its reasonably foreseeable use, would expose people such as the plaintiff to harm.
- 29. Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 prepared, distributed and sold food that was adulterated and contaminated with *Shigella* bacteria, by which the food was rendered adulterated, unwholesome and injurious to health, in violation of California's Sherman Food,

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27 28 Drug and Cosmetic Laws, California Health and Safety Code sections 109875, et seq. and particularly section 110620, and similar federal health and safety standards and regulations.

- 30. Plaintiff utilized the contaminated food product as anticipated by defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 when he consumed it. As a proximate cause of plaintiff's use of the products in a fashion anticipated by the defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20, plaintiff suffered injury and damages as described herein. Plaintiff was injured by his consumption of contaminated, which was adulterated, contaminated, unwholesome, injurious to his health and unfit for human consumption.
- 31. The plaintiff has suffered general and special, incidental and consequential damages, as the direct and proximate result of the acts and/or omissions of defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 as set forth above, which damages shall be fully proven at the time of trial, including, but not limited to, damages for loss of enjoyment of life, both past and future; medical and medical related expenses, both past and future; wage and economic loss, past and future; emotional distress, and future emotional distress; medical and pharmaceutical expenses, past and future; and other ordinary, incidental and consequential damages as would be anticipated to arise under the circumstances.

Wherefore, Plaintiff DANIEL ESTRADA prays for judgment against Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20, as set forth below.

## **THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION**

NEGLIGENCE PER SE - Violation of California's Sherman Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Laws, California Health and Safety Code § 109875, et seq. (Against Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20)

- 32. By this reference, paragraphs 1 through 31 of this Complaint are fully incorporated as if each and every one of these paragraphs was set forth here in its entirety.
  - 33. Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba

MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 were negligent in manufacturing, distributing and selling food products that were not reasonably safe because adequate warnings or instructions were not provided, including but not limited to, the warning that the food product may contain *Shigella* and thus, should not be given to, or eaten by, people.

- 34. The defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 each additionally owed a duty to comply with statutory and regulatory provisions that pertained or applied to either the import, manufacture, distribution, storage, or sale of their product or product-ingredients, including, but not limited to, California's Sherman Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, CA Health & Safety Code §110545, which bans the manufacture, sale and distribution of any "adulterated" food. The Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Act, §402(a), as codified at 21 U.S.C. §342(a) also provides the standard for the manufacture, sale and distribution of any "adulterated" food.
- 35. Under applicable state law, food is adulterated if it contains a "poisonous or deleterious substance, which may render it injurious to health." *Shigella* is such a substance. Thus, by either manufacture, distribution, storage, or sale of the subject product, defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 breached their statutory and regulatory duties, and the plaintiff was injured as a direct and proximate result of such breaches.
- 36. The defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20's negligent acts and omissions included, but were not limited to:
- (a) Failure to prevent the contamination of the product by *Shigella*, including the failure to implement or non-negligently perform inspection and monitoring of the product such that its adulterated condition would be discovered prior to its sale or distribution to the public for human consumption.
- (b) Failure to properly supervise, train, and monitor their employees, or the employees of their agents or subcontractors, on how to ensure the manufacture, distribution or sale of food product free of adulteration by potentially lethal pathogens.

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- 37. The state food safety regulations applicable here, and as set forth above, establish a positive and definite standard of care in the import, manufacture, distribution or sale of food, and the violation of these regulations constitutes negligence *per se*.
- 38. The plaintiff was in the class of persons intended to be protected by these statutes and regulations, and was injured as the direct and proximate result of the defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20's violation of applicable state and local food safety regulations.
- 39. The defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 breached the aforementioned duties as alleged above, which breach constituted the proximate cause of injury to plaintiff.
- 40. The plaintiff has suffered general and special, incidental and consequential damages, as the direct and proximate result of the acts and/or omissions of defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 as set forth above, which damages shall be fully proven at the time of trial, including, but not limited to, damages for loss of enjoyment of life, both past and future; medical and medical related expenses, both past and future; wage and economic loss, past and future; emotional distress, and future emotional distress; medical and pharmaceutical expenses, past and future; and other ordinary, incidental and consequential damages as would be anticipated to arise under the circumstances.

Wherefore, Plaintiff DANIEL ESTRADA prays for judgment against Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20, as set forth below.

# FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION BREACH OF IMPLIED WARRANTY (Against Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC. and DOES 1-20)

- 41. By this reference, paragraphs 1 through 40 of this Complaint are fully incorporated as if each and every one of these paragraphs was set forth here in its entirety.
  - 42. Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba

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27 28 MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 impliedly warranted that the contaminated food product was of merchantable quality, and was safe and fit for human consumption. Plaintiff purchased and consumed the food product, and reasonably relied upon the skill and judgment of defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 as to whether the products were of merchantable quality and fit for human consumption.

- Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba 43. MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 breached these implied warranties in that defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20's food products were contaminated with Shigella. As a direct, legal and proximate result of the breach of implied warranties, plaintiff suffered and may continue to suffer injury, harm, special damages and economic loss.
- The plaintiff has suffered general and special, incidental and consequential damages, as the 44. direct and proximate result of the acts and/or omissions of defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20 as set forth above, which damages shall be fully proven at the time of trial, including, but not limited to, damages for loss of enjoyment of life, both past and future; medical and medical related expenses, both past and future; wage and economic loss, past and future; emotional distress, and future emotional distress; medical and pharmaceutical expenses, past and future; and other ordinary, incidental and consequential damages as would be anticipated to arise under the circumstances.

Wherefore, Plaintiff DANIEL ESTRADA prays for judgment against Defendants SERGIO BECERRA CRUZ and LOURDES GARCIA BECERRA dba MARISCOS SAN JUAN NO. 3, SERGIO'S RESTAURANTS, INC., and DOES 1-20, as set forth below.

## PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, plaintiff prays as follows:

That the court award plaintiffs judgment against each of the defendants, jointly and (1)severally liable, in such sums as shall be determined to fully and fairly compensate plaintiffs for all general, special, incidental and consequential damages incurred, or to be incurred, by plaintiffs as the direct and