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**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

MARK TRAMMELL, individually and on
behalf of all those similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

v.

KLN ENTERPRISES, INC., dba Wiley
Wallaby, a Minnesota corporation,

Defendant.

Case No.: 3:23-cv-01884-H-JLB

**ORDER GRANTING DEFENDANT’S
MOTION TO DISMISS
PLAINTIFF’S FIRST AMENDED
COMPLAINT WITHOUT LEAVE
TO AMEND**

[Doc. No. 23.]

On June 14, 2024, Defendant KLN Enterprises, Inc., dba Wiley Wallaby (“Defendant”) filed a motion to dismiss Plaintiff Mark Trammell’s (“Plaintiff”) first amended complaint (“FAC”) pursuant to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 8, 9(b), 12(b)(1), and 12(b)(6). (Doc. No. 23.) On July 1, 2024, Plaintiff filed a response in opposition to Defendant’s motion to dismiss. (Doc. No. 25.) On July 8, 2024, Defendant filed a reply. (Doc. No. 26.) On June 24, 2024, the Court, pursuant to its discretion under Local Rule 7.1(d)(1), submitted the motion on the parties’ papers. (Doc. No. 24.) For the reasons below, the Court grants Defendant’s motion to dismiss without leave to amend.

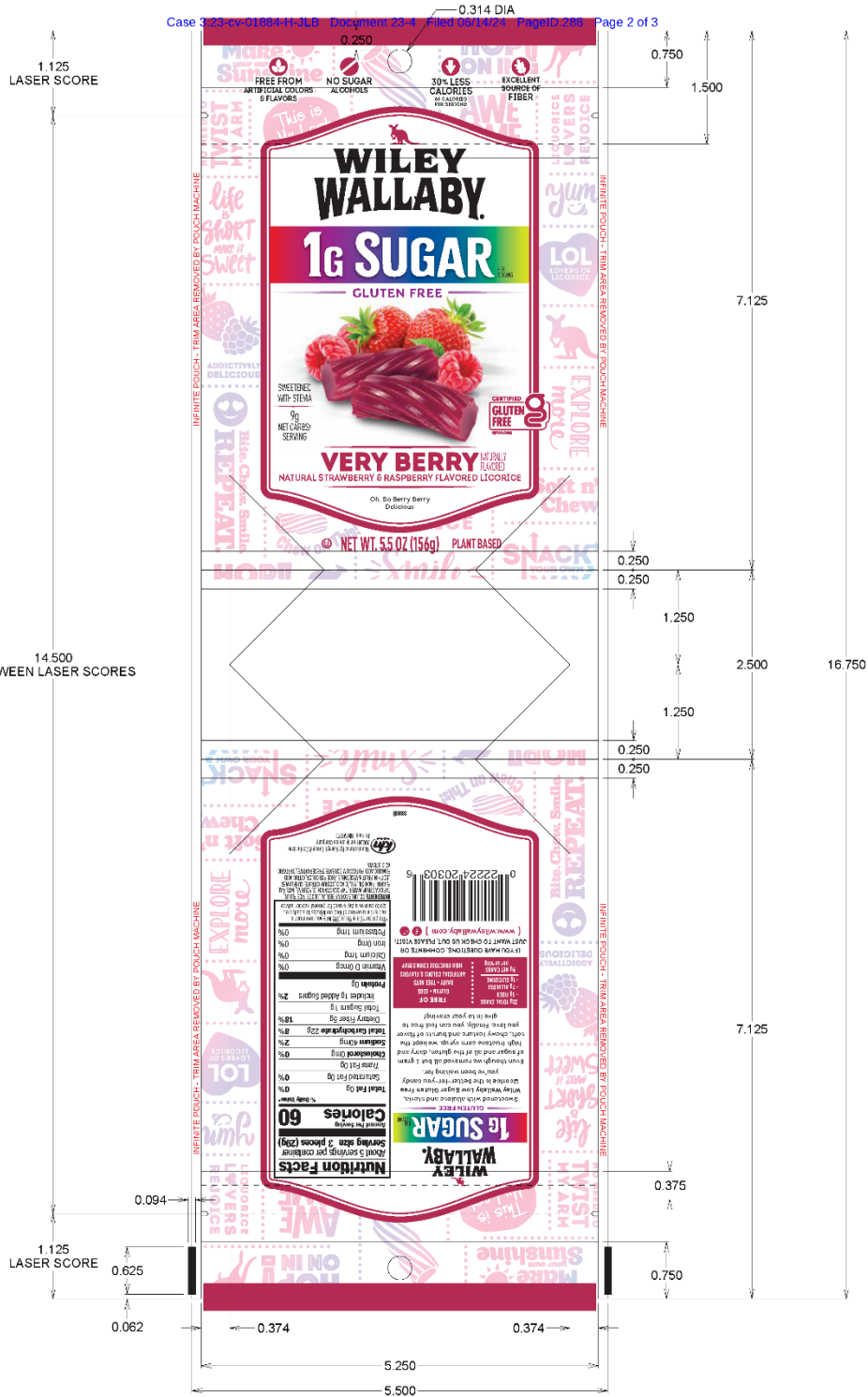
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BACKGROUND

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2 The following factual background is taken from the allegations in Plaintiff’s FAC.
3 Plaintiff is a resident and citizen of the state of California. (Doc. No. 19, FAC ¶ 1.)
4 Defendant manufactures and sells licorice candies including, Wiley Wallaby Very Berry
5 Licorice. (Id. at 1.) On or about May 23, 2023, Plaintiff claims that he purchased Wiley
6 Wallaby Very Berry Licorice from a Target in Encinitas, California. (Id. ¶ 18.) Plaintiff
7 alleges that he “is a student who attempts to eat ‘clean’” and “[h]e prefers to consume only
8 products that contain all-natural flavorings.” (Id. ¶ 19.) Plaintiff further alleges that he
9 “carefully reviews food and product labels, including the [Wiley Wallaby Very Berry
10 Licorice] label, to understand the characteristics of the products he consumes.” (Id.)

11 As incorporated by reference in Plaintiff’s FAC, (see Doc. No. 19 ¶ 21), and as
12 attached as an exhibit to Defendant’s request for judicial notice, (Doc. No. 23-4 at 2–3),
13 the subsequent images depict the packaging of Defendant’s Wiley Wallaby Very Berry
14 Licorice:¹

15
16
17 ¹ In support of Defendant’s motion to dismiss Plaintiff’s FAC, Defendant requests
18 that the Court take judicial notice of the complete packaging artwork for Defendant’s Wiley
19 Wallaby Very Berry Licorice. (Doc. No. 23-2 at 2–4.) The Court grants Defendant’s
20 request. “A court may . . . consider certain materials—documents attached to the
21 complaint, documents incorporated by reference in the complaint, or matters of judicial
22 notice—without converting the motion to dismiss into a motion for summary judgment.”
23 United States v. Ritchie, 342 F.3d 903, 908 (9th Cir. 2003). Here, the Court considers
24 Defendant’s Wiley Wallaby Very Berry Licorice labels as incorporated by reference in
25 Plaintiff’s FAC and attached as an exhibit to Defendant’s request for judicial notice
26 because Plaintiff relies on Defendant’s Wiley Wallaby Very Berry Licorice labels in the
27 FAC and defines the term “the Products” as “Wiley Wallaby Very Berry Licorice” in the
28 FAC. See In re NVIDIA Corp. Sec. Litig., 768 F.3d 1046, 1058 n.10 (9th Cir. 2014)
 (“Because Plaintiffs incorporate by reference Mr. Hunt’s declaration, relying on portions
 of it in their complaint, we may properly consider the declaration in its entirety.” (citations
 omitted)). Plaintiff also requests that the Court take judicial notice of an amicus brief filed
 by Rob Bonta, the Attorney General of the State of California, in the matter of Souter v.
 Edgewell Personal Care Company, No. 22-55898 (9th Cir.). (Doc. No. 25-1 at 1–2.)
 Because the Court does not reference or cite to the document at issue in the request for
 judicial notice, the Court denies Plaintiff’s request as moot.



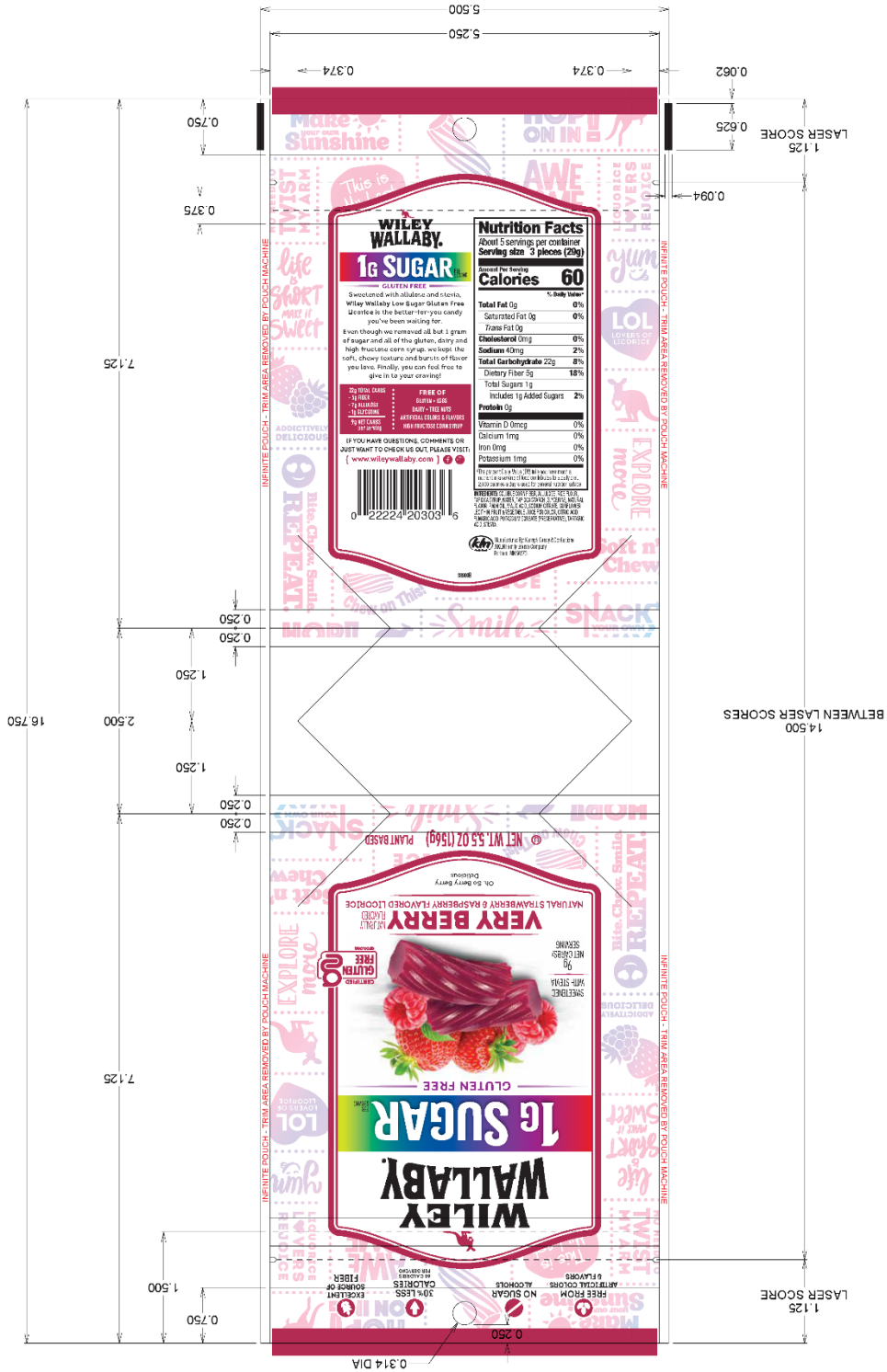
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Case 3:23-cv-01884-H-JLB Document 30 Filed 09/12/24 PageID.415 Page 4 of 20



1 (Doc. No. 23-4 at 2–3.)

2 The front label of the packaging for Defendant’s product states that it is “Natural
3 Strawberry & Raspberry Flavored Licorice” and “Naturally Flavored,” while the back label
4 of the packaging states that Defendant’s product is “Free of . . . Artificial Colors &
5 Flavors.” (*Id.*) Plaintiff alleges that these statements are reinforced by depictions of fruits.
6 (FAC ¶ 21.) Plaintiff alleges that those representations on Defendant’s packaging are false
7 and misleading because Wiley Wallaby Very Berry Licorice “contain[s] an ingredient
8 known as ‘malic acid’ which is used as a flavoring in the Products.” (*Id.* ¶ 22.) Plaintiff
9 further alleges that the “form of malic acid used in these Products is artificial.” (*Id.*)
10 Specifically, Plaintiff alleges that independent third-party testing on June 28, 2023,
11 revealed that “the malic acid used in these Products is DL malic acid, . . . [which] does not
12 occur naturally.” (*Id.* ¶¶ 27–28 (citations omitted).) Plaintiff claims that he reviewed the
13 product’s labels, including the statement that Wiley Wallaby Very Berry Licorice is
14 naturally flavored, prior to purchasing the product. (*Id.* ¶ 51.) Plaintiff also contends that
15 he relied on the labels’ statements and would not have purchased the product or would have
16 only been willing to pay a substantially reduced price had he known about Defendant’s
17 alleged misrepresentations. (*Id.* ¶ 53.)

18 On October 16, 2023, Plaintiff filed a class action complaint against Defendant,
19 alleging claims for: (1) violations of the California Consumers Legal Remedies Act
20 (“CLRA”), California Civil Code §§ 1750, *et seq.*; (2) unjust enrichment; and (3) breach
21 of express warranty. (Doc. No. 1 ¶¶ 71–93.) On December 21, 2023, Defendant filed a
22 motion to dismiss Plaintiff’s complaint pursuant to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 8,
23 9(b), 12(b)(1), and 12(b)(6). (Doc. No. 6.) On January 12, 2024, Plaintiff filed a response
24 in opposition to Defendant’s motion to dismiss. (Doc. No. 7.) On January 22, 2024,
25 Defendant filed a reply. (Doc. No. 10.) On April 22, 2024, the Court granted Defendant’s
26 motion to dismiss with leave to amend. (Doc. No. 13.)

27 On April 24, 2024, Plaintiff filed a motion for reconsideration. (Doc. No. 14.) On
28 May 13, 2024, Defendant filed a response in opposition to Plaintiff’s motion for

1 reconsideration. (Doc. No. 15.) On May 16, 2024, Plaintiff filed a reply. (Doc. No. 17.)
2 On May 20, 2024, the Court denied Plaintiff’s motion for reconsideration. (Doc. No. 18.)
3 On May 22, 2024, Plaintiff filed his FAC. (Doc. No. 19.) By the present motion,
4 Defendant moves pursuant to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 8, 9(b), 12(b)(1),
5 and 12(b)(6) to dismiss Plaintiff’s FAC in its entirety. (Doc. No. 23.)

6 DISCUSSION

7 **I. LEGAL STANDARDS**

8 **A. Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6)**

9 A motion to dismiss under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6) tests the legal
10 sufficiency of the pleadings and allows a court to dismiss a complaint if the plaintiff has
11 failed to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. See Conservation Force v.
12 Salazar, 646 F.3d 1240, 1241 (9th Cir. 2011) (citing Navarro v. Block, 250 F.3d 729, 732
13 (9th Cir. 2001)). Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a)(2) requires that a pleading that states
14 a claim for relief contain “a short and plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader
15 is entitled to relief.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2). The function of this pleading requirement is
16 to “give the defendant fair notice of what the . . . claim is and the grounds upon which it
17 rests.” Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007) (quoting Conley v.
18 Gibson, 355 U.S. 41, 47 (1957)).

19 A complaint will survive a Rule 12(b)(6) motion to dismiss if it contains “enough
20 facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.” Id. at 570. “A claim has facial
21 plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the
22 reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged.” Ashcroft v.
23 Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009). “A pleading that offers ‘labels and conclusions’ or ‘a
24 formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action will not do.” Id. (quoting
25 Twombly, 550 U.S. at 555). “Threadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action,
26 supported by mere conclusory statements, do not suffice.” Id. “While legal conclusions
27 can provide the framework of a complaint, they must be supported by factual allegations.”
28 Id. at 679. Accordingly, dismissal for failure to state a claim is proper where the claim

1 “lacks a cognizable legal theory or sufficient facts to support a cognizable legal theory.”
2 Menciondo v. Centinela Hosp. Med. Ctr., 521 F.3d 1097, 1104 (9th Cir. 2008); see Los
3 Angeles Lakers, Inc. v. Fed. Ins. Co., 869 F.3d 795, 800 (9th Cir. 2017).

4 In reviewing a Rule 12(b)(6) motion to dismiss, a district court must “accept the
5 factual allegations of the complaint as true and construe them in the light most favorable
6 to the plaintiff.” Los Angeles Lakers, 869 F.3d at 800 (quoting AE ex rel. Hernandez v.
7 Cty. of Tulare, 666 F.3d 631, 636 (9th Cir. 2012)). But a court need not accept “legal
8 conclusions” as true. Iqbal, 556 U.S. at 678. “Further, it is improper for a court to assume
9 the claimant “can prove facts which it has not alleged or that the defendants have violated
10 the . . . laws in ways that have not been alleged.” Associated Gen. Contractors of Cal., Inc.
11 v. Cal. State Council of Carpenters, 459 U.S. 519, 526 (1983). In addition, a court may
12 consider documents incorporated into the complaint by reference and items that are proper
13 subjects of judicial notice. See Coto Settlement v. Eisenberg, 593 F.3d 1031, 1038 (9th
14 Cir. 2010). If the court dismisses a complaint for failure to state a claim, it must then
15 determine whether to grant leave to amend. See Doe v. United States, 58 F.3d 494, 497
16 (9th Cir. 1995). “A district court should grant leave to amend . . . unless it determines that
17 the pleading could not possibly be cured by the allegation of other facts.” Id.

18 **B. Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 9(b)**

19 Claims based in fraud require a heightened particularity in pleading. See Fed. R.
20 Civ. P. 9(b). Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 9(b) establishes that an allegation of “fraud
21 or mistake must state with particularity the circumstances constituting fraud.” Id. The
22 circumstances required by Rule 9(b) are the “who, what, when, where, and how” of the
23 fraudulent activity. Cafasso, U.S. ex rel. v. Gen. Dynamics C4 Sys., Inc., 637 F.3d 1047,
24 1055 (9th Cir. 2011). In addition, the allegation “must set forth what is false or misleading
25 about a statement, and why it is false.” Id.

26 This heightened pleading standard ensures that “allegations of fraud are specific
27 enough to give defendants notice of the particular misconduct which is alleged to constitute
28 the fraud charged so that they can defend against the charge and not just deny that they

1 have done anything wrong.” Semegen v. Weidner, 780 F.2d 727, 731 (9th Cir. 1985).
2 Additionally, it “attempts to protect defendants from the harm that may come to their
3 reputations or to their goodwill when they are charged with wrongdoing: ‘[I]t has been said
4 [that the requirement] is necessary to safeguard potential defendants from lightly made
5 claims charging the commission of acts that involve some degree of moral turpitude.’”
6 Macchiavelli v. Shearson, Hammill & Co., Inc., 384 F. Supp. 21, 28 (E.D. Cal. 1974)
7 (quoting Wright and Miller, 5A Federal Practice and Procedure: Civil § 1296 (3rd ed.)).

8 C. Article III Standing

9 Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(1) provides for dismissal for lack of subject
10 matter jurisdiction. Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(b)(1). Under Rule 12(b)(1), a federal court is to
11 first determine its jurisdiction over the dispute. See Bates v. United Parcel Serv., Inc., 511
12 F.3d 974, 985 (9th Cir. 2007); Ellis v. J.P. Morgan Chase & Co., 950 F. Supp. 2d 1062,
13 1071 (N.D. Cal. 2013). A court sustains a facial attack on subject matter jurisdiction if
14 “the allegations contained in the complaint [or on matters which the court can take judicial
15 notice of] are insufficient on their face to invoke federal jurisdiction.” Safe Air for
16 Everyone v. Meyer, 373 F.3d 1035, 1039 (9th Cir. 2004).

17 Article III limits the jurisdiction of federal courts to “cases” and “controversies,”
18 which is delineated by the doctrine of standing. Lujan v. Defenders of Wildlife, 504
19 U.S. 555, 560 (1992). To establish standing, a plaintiff must first have suffered an “injury
20 in fact” which is “concrete and particularized” as well as “actual or imminent, not
21 conjectural or hypothetical.” Id. (citations omitted). Second, the injury must be “fairly
22 traceable to the challenged action of the defendant” Id. (citations and alterations
23 omitted). Finally, it must be “likely” that the “injury will be redressed by a favorable
24 decision.” Id. (citations omitted). “The plaintiff, as the party invoking federal jurisdiction,
25 bears the burden of establishing these elements.” Spokeo, Inc. v. Robins, 578 U.S. 330,
26 338 (2016). Moreover, “[a] plaintiff must demonstrate constitutional standing separately
27 for each form of relief requested.” Davidson v. Kimberly-Clark Corp., 889 F.3d 956, 967
28 (9th Cir. 2018) (citing Friends of the Earth, Inc. v. Laidlaw Env'tl. Servs. (TOC) Inc., 528

1 U.S. 167, 185 (2000)).

2 The Ninth Circuit has held that “a previously deceived consumer may have standing
3 to seek an injunction against false advertising or labeling, even though the consumer now
4 knows or suspects that the advertising was false at the time of the original purchase,
5 because the consumer may suffer an ‘actual and imminent, not conjectural or hypothetical’
6 threat of future harm.” Davidson, 889 F.3d at 969. “A customer who is deceived by false
7 advertising may have standing to seek injunctive relief forbidding the defendant from
8 engaging in the same false advertising again[,]” if the consumer can “establish the threat
9 of actual and imminent injury.” Jackson v. General Mills, Inc., No. 18-cv-02634-LAB-
10 BGS, 2020 WL 5106652, at *5 (S.D. Cal. Aug. 28, 2020) (emphasis removed) (discussing
11 Davidson, 889 F.3d at 967). The “threatened injury must be certainly impending to
12 constitute injury in fact, and . . . allegations of possible future injury are not sufficient.”
13 Clapper v. Amnesty Int’l USA, 568 U.S. 398, 409 (2013) (internal citations omitted).
14 While “[a] plaintiff who is deceived by false advertising may be injured by her inability to
15 rely on advertising in the future[,] where a plaintiff learns information during litigation that
16 enables her to evaluate product claims and make appropriate purchasing decisions going
17 forward, an injunction would serve no meaningful purpose as to that plaintiff.”
18 Jackson, 2020 WL 5106652, at *5; Rahman v. Mott’s LLP, No. 13-cv-03482-SI, 2018
19 WL 4585024, at *3 (N.D. Cal. Sept. 25, 2018); Fernandez v. Atkins Nutritionals, Inc.,
20 No. 17-cv-01628-GPC-WVG, 2018 WL 280028, at *15 (S.D. Cal. Jan. 3, 2018).

21 **II. ANALYSIS**

22 Defendant moves pursuant to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 8, 9(b), 12(b)(1),
23 and 12(b)(6) to dismiss Plaintiff’s FAC with prejudice. (Doc. No. 23.) Specifically,
24 Defendant argues that: (1) Plaintiff fails to plead his claims, which Defendant argues are
25 all grounded in fraud, with sufficient particularity as required by Fed. R. Civ. P. 9(b);
26 (2) Plaintiff’s CLRA claim does not pass the reasonable consumer test; (3) Plaintiff lacks
27 Article III standing to pursue his claim for injunctive relief; and (4) Plaintiff cannot pursue
28 equitable remedies because he has failed to plead facts establishing that his legal remedies

1 are inadequate. (Doc. No. 23 at 2; Doc. No. 23-1 at 9–10.)

2 **A. Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 9(b)**

3 Defendant argues that Plaintiff fails to state a claim under Rule 9(b)’s heightened
4 pleading standard. (See Doc. No. 23 at 2.) Rule 9(b)’s heightened pleading standard
5 applies to “averments of fraud” in civil cases brought in federal court. See Fed. R. Civ.
6 P. 9(b). Specifically, the Ninth Circuit has held that Rule 9(b) applies to CLRA claims that
7 are grounded in fraud. Kearns v. Ford Motor Co., 567 F.3d 1120, 1125 (9th Cir. 2009);
8 Vess v. Ciba–Geigy Corp. USA, 317 F.3d 1097, 1103–06 (9th Cir. 2003). Additionally,
9 the Ninth Circuit has held that a claim is “grounded in fraud” for the purposes of Rule 9(b)
10 where “the plaintiff [] allege[s] a unified course of fraudulent conduct and rel[ies] entirely
11 on that course of conduct as the basis of a claim.” Vess, 317 F.3d at 1103–04.

12 Here, Plaintiff’s FAC claims rely entirely on the same course of alleged
13 conduct: Defendant fraudulently misrepresents that Wiley Wallaby Very Berry Licorice is
14 “Naturally Flavored” and “Free of . . . Artificial Colors & Flavors” because it contains
15 artificial malic acid that functions as a flavor. (See FAC ¶¶ 21–22, 56, 75–76, 82, 92.)
16 Because Plaintiff alleges that Defendant has engaged in a unified course of fraudulent
17 conduct, it is inconsequential that fraud is not an element of some of Plaintiff’s claims. See
18 Vess, 317 F.3d at 1103. Accordingly, Plaintiff’s claims are subject to Rule 9(b)’s
19 heightened pleading requirement. See, e.g., Loh v. Future Motion, Inc.,
20 No. 21-cv-06088-EJD, 2022 WL 2668380, at *5 (N.D. Cal. July 11, 2022) (“[E]ach claim
21 is subject to the requirements of Rule 9(b),” including claims for CLRA and unjust
22 enrichment.); Arabian v. Organic Candy Factory, No. 17-cv-05410-ODW, 2018
23 WL 1406608, at *3–*4 (C.D. Cal. Mar. 19, 2018) (“Each of [p]laintiff’s ten claims . . . must
24 be pleaded with particularity,” including claims for express warranty, CLRA, and unjust
25 enrichment.).

26 Upon review of the Wiley Wallaby Very Berry Licorice labeling, the label clearly
27 lists malic acid as an ingredient but makes no mention as to whether the malic acid used is
28 natural or artificial. (See Doc. No. 23-4 at 2–3.) Defendant argues that Plaintiff once again

1 fails to plead with sufficient particularity that the malic acid used in the product is artificial.
2 (See Doc. No. 23-1 at 18–20.) The Court agrees. Although Plaintiff characterizes the
3 malic acid used as “artificial,” “conclusory allegations that the flavoring is artificial are
4 insufficient to state a claim.” Robie v. Trader Joe’s Co., No. 20-cv-07355-JSW, 2021
5 WL 2548960, at *5 (N.D. Cal. June 14, 2021). And for a second time, Plaintiff fails to
6 allege facts with sufficient particularity that Defendant uses artificial malic acid in the
7 product. (See generally FAC.) Plaintiff attempts to cure these deficiencies by alluding to
8 the price of naturally occurring malic acid, speculating that it “is quite expensive and is
9 generally cost-prohibitive to use in mass-produced foods and beverages.” (FAC ¶ 23.) But
10 speculations about Defendant’s economic incentives or common industry practice does not
11 amount to a plausible allegation that the malic acid used is “artificial.” See, e.g., Zaback
12 v. Kellogg Sales Co., No. 20-cv-00268-BEN-MSB, 2020 WL 3414656, at *2–*3 (S.D. Cal.
13 June 22, 2020) (finding insufficient the plaintiff’s conjecture about the cost of vanilla and
14 Kellogg’s economic incentives to use less expensive “natural flavor”).

15 Plaintiff also attempts to cure these deficiencies by alleging that the testing
16 performed “on or about June 28, 2023 by Krueger Food Laboratories, Inc. of Chelmsford,
17 Massachusetts . . . revealed that the D isomer was present in the Product purchased by
18 Plaintiff.” (FAC ¶ 27–28.) Thus, Plaintiff asserts that this testing “establishes that the
19 malic acid used in these Products is DL malic acid, and not L malic acid[,] . . . which ‘does
20 not occur naturally.’” (Id. ¶ 28 (citing C.F.R. § 184.1069(a).) But this continues to fall
21 short of Rule 9(b)’s heightened pleading standard. See, e.g., Scheibe v. Performance
22 Enhancing Supplements, LLC, No. 23-cv-00219-H-DDL, 2023 WL 3829694, at *3 (S.D.
23 Cal. June 5, 2023) (“Plaintiff’s only allegation for the “how” prong is a single conclusory
24 allegation that states “testing by an independent third-party laboratory has confirmed that
25 the malic acid that Defendant uses in these Products is DL malic acid. . . .” (citing
26 Cafasso, 637 F.3d at 1055)); see also Hawkins v. Coca-Cola Co., 654 F. Supp. 3d 290,
27 296–97, 304–06 (S.D.N.Y. 2023) (dismissing the complaint and concluding that the “bare,
28 unsubstantiated allegations about the possibility that the Product contains artificial

1 DL-Malic acid, without any additional factual support,” were not sufficient to establish that
2 the soda contained “artificial” malic acid (emphasis removed)); Myers v. Wakefern Food
3 Corp., No. 20-cv-08470-NSR, 2022 WL 603000, at *4 (S.D.N.Y. Mar. 1, 2022) (noting
4 that the complaint failed to “describe the testing methodology followed, the
5 specific . . . time . . . of the testing, . . . [or] the qualifications of the testers”).

6 As Plaintiff once again acknowledges in his FAC, Wiley Wallaby Very Berry
7 Licorice is a licorice candy. (See FAC ¶ 20.) And nowhere on the Wiley Wallaby Very
8 Berry Licorice labeling does it state that the product is “all natural,” “100% natural,” or
9 “free of artificial ingredients.” (See Doc. No. 23-4 at 2–3.) Accordingly, Plaintiff fails to
10 “set forth what is false or misleading about [Wiley Wallaby Very Berry Licorice’s
11 labeling], and why it is false,” see Cafasso, 637 F.3d at 1055, and thus, fails to give
12 Defendant notice of the particular misconduct which is alleged to constitute the fraud. See
13 Semegen, 780 F.2d at 731. Because Plaintiff has not alleged with sufficient particularity
14 that the malic acid used in Wiley Wallaby Very Berry Licorice is artificial, Plaintiff’s
15 claims fail to meet Rule 9(b)’s heightened pleading standard and must be dismissed. See
16 Scheibe, 2023 WL 3829694, at *3; In re Bang Energy Drink Marketing Litig., No. 18-
17 cv-05758-JST, 2020 WL 4458916, at *5 (N.D. Cal. Feb. 6, 2020) (concluding that the
18 plaintiff’s conclusory allegations, without additional, more specific allegations, “failed to
19 meet the heightened standard of Rule 9(b)”).

20 **B. Reasonable Consumer Standard**

21 Even assuming Plaintiff’s claims meet the heightened pleading standard of
22 Rule 9(b), Plaintiff’s CLRA claim nevertheless fails under the reasonable consumer
23 standard. Claims under the CLRA are governed by the “reasonable consumer” standard.
24 McGinity v. Procter & Gamble Co., 69 F.4th 1093, 1097 (9th Cir. 2023) (citing Williams
25 v. Gerber Prods. Co., 552 F.3d 934, 938 (9th Cir. 2008)). Under that standard, a plaintiff
26 “must ‘show that members of the public are likely to be deceived.’” Becerra v. Dr
27 Pepper/Seven Up, Inc., 945 F.3d 1225, 1228 (9th Cir. 2019) (quoting Williams, 552 F.3d
28 at 938).

1 The reasonable consumer standard requires “more than a mere possibility that [the
2 defendant’s] label ‘might conceivably be misunderstood by some few consumers viewing
3 it in an unreasonable manner.’” Ebner v. Fresh, Inc., 838 F.3d 958, 965 (9th Cir. 2016)
4 (quoting Lavie v. Procter & Gamble Co., 105 Cal. App. 4th 496, 508 (2003)). Rather, a
5 plaintiff must plausibly allege “a probability ‘that a significant portion of the general
6 consuming public or of targeted consumers, acting reasonably in the circumstances, could
7 be misled.’” Id. (quoting Lavie, 105 Cal. App. 4th at 508); see also McGinity, 69 F.4th
8 at 1097 (“The touchstone under the ‘reasonable consumer’ test is whether the product
9 labeling and ads promoting the products have a meaningful capacity to deceive
10 consumers.”). Put another way, “[a] representation does not become “false and deceptive”
11 merely because it will be unreasonably misunderstood by an insignificant and
12 unrepresentative segment of the class of persons to whom the representation is addressed.”
13 Lavie, 105 Cal. App. 4th at 507 (citation omitted). “Indeed, a plaintiff’s unreasonable
14 assumptions about a product’s label will not suffice.” Moore v. Trader Joe’s Co., 4 F.4th
15 874, 882 (9th Cir. 2021); see also La Barbera v. Olé Mexican Foods Inc., No. 20-cv-02324-
16 JGB-SPX, 2023 WL 4162348, at *11 (C.D. Cal. May 18, 2023) (“The bottom line is this:
17 under Moore, the reasonable consumer does not approach purchasing decisions with a
18 professorial genius or inclination toward exhaustive research, but [h]e is also not a chump,
19 too doltish or careless to engage [a] simple analysis.” (citation omitted)).

20 The “primary evidence in a false advertising case is the advertising itself.” Brockley
21 v. Moore, 107 Cal. App. 4th 86, 100 (2003). And “[p]laintiff’s selective interpretation of
22 part of a product’s packaging presentation cannot support a CLRA, FAL, or UCL claim.”
23 Hairston v. S. Beach Beverage Co., No. 12-cv-01429-JFW, 2012 WL 1893818, at *4 (C.D.
24 Cal. May 18, 2012). “[W]here a court can conclude as a matter of law that members of the
25 public are not likely to be deceived by the product packaging, dismissal is appropriate.” Id.
26 Moreover, absent a plausible claim of deception, claims for breach of express warranty and
27 unjust enrichment also fail. See Weiss v. Trader Joe’s Co., 838 F. App’x 302, 303 (9th
28 Cir. 2021) (affirming dismissal of warranty claims premised on the “exact same

1 representations as [the plaintiff’s] consumer protection claim”); Girard v. Toyota Motor
2 Sales, U.S.A., Inc., 316 F. App’x 561, 563 (9th Cir. 2008) (an “unjust enrichment claim
3 also fails” when a defendant’s “non-deceptive advertising does not entitle [the plaintiff] to
4 restitutionary relief” (citation omitted)).

5 Plaintiff asserts that Defendant’s labeling is misleading because Defendant’s product
6 makes unambiguous claims to be “Naturally Flavored” and “Free of . . . Artificial Colors
7 & Flavors,” and it reinforces those claims with depictions of fruits on the packaging. (See
8 Doc. No. 25 at 20–27.) Plaintiff further asserts that a reasonable consumer is not required
9 to investigate the product’s ingredient list for clues that Defendant was not telling the truth
10 when it made those unambiguous label statements. (See id.) Defendant argues that no
11 reasonable consumer would believe that a bright red, shelf-stable candy is free of artificial
12 ingredients when the product’s back label makes it abundantly clear that the licorice has
13 artificial ingredients. (Doc. No. 23-1 at 22–25; see also Doc. No. 23-4 at 2–3.)

14 The Ninth Circuit made clear that the “front label must be unambiguously deceptive
15 for a defendant to be precluded from insisting that the back label be considered together
16 with the front label.” McGinity, 69 F.4th at 1098. In other words, if the front label is
17 ambiguous, the Court must consider both the front and back labels of the packaging in
18 determining whether a reasonable consumer would be deceived by the packaging. See id.

19 Here, the front label of Wiley Wallaby’s Very Berry Licorice is not unambiguously
20 deceptive. (See Doc. No. 23-4 at 2–3.) While the front label states that the product is
21 “Natural Strawberry & Raspberry Flavored Licorice” and “Naturally Flavored,” nowhere
22 on the front label does it affirmatively state that the product is “all natural,” “100% natural,”
23 or “free of artificial ingredients.” (Id.) Thus, a reasonable consumer would not interpret
24 the front label as unambiguously representing that Wiley Wallaby’s Very Berry Licorice
25 does not contain artificial ingredients. Because the front label is ambiguous, the Court
26 must consider both the front and the back label in determining whether a reasonable

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1 consumer would be deceived by the packaging.² See McGinity, 69 F.4th at 1098.

2 Upon review of the front and back labels of Wiley Wallaby Very Bery Licorice, the
3 Court concludes that the public is not likely to be deceived by Defendant’s packaging. (See
4 Doc. No. 23-4 at 2–3.) As Plaintiff acknowledges in his FAC, Wiley Wallaby Very Berry
5 Licorice is a licorice candy. (FAC ¶ 20.) And Defendant discloses both natural and
6 artificial ingredients in plain text on the product’s back label. (See Doc. No. 23-4 at 2–3.)
7 Moreover, nowhere on the front or back label does it state that the product is “all natural,”
8 “100% natural,” or “free of artificial ingredients.” (See id.) Accordingly, nothing about
9 this product—a brightly colored, shelf-stable licorice candy—would lead a reasonable
10 consumer to conclude that Wiley Wallaby Very Berry Licorice is free of artificial
11 ingredients when the product labels make no affirmative representations saying as such.
12 See, e.g., Brown v. Starbucks Corp., No. 18-cv-02286-JM-WVG, 2019 WL 996399, at *3
13 (S.D. Cal. Mar. 1, 2019) (“Nothing about the product itself—a brightly-colored, gelatinous
14 candy—would lead a reasonable consumer to conclude that the Gummies contain only
15 natural ingredients.”); Gouwens v. Target Corp., No. 22-cv-50016, 2022 WL 18027524,
16 at *3 (N.D. Ill. Dec. 30, 2022) (“A reasonable consumer would not believe that a
17 shelf-stable, bright red fruit punch flavored liquid water enhancer was free of artificial
18 ingredients absent an affirmative statement to the contrary.”).

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20 ² On July 24, 2024, Plaintiff filed a notice of supplemental authority, pointing the
21 Court to Whiteside v. Kimberly Clark Corp., 108 F.4th 771, 2024 WL 3435308 (9th Cir.
22 July 17, 2024). (Doc. No. 29.) But as Plaintiff correctly points out in his notice, in
23 Whiteside, the panel held that when a plaintiff plausibly alleges that a reasonable consumer
24 could interpret the front label as “unambiguously representing” that the product does not
25 contain artificial ingredients, these allegations “preclude Defendant’s reliance on the
26 back-label ingredients list” on a motion to dismiss. 108 F.4th at 782. Here, the front label
27 does not state that the product is “all natural,” “100% natural,” or “free of artificial
28 ingredients.” (See Doc. No. 23-4 at 2–3.) Thus, a reasonable consumer would not interpret
the front label as “unambiguously representing” that Wiley Wallaby’s Very Berry Licorice
does not contain artificial ingredients. Accordingly, the Court must consider both the front
and the back label in determining whether a reasonable consumer would be deceived by
the packaging. See Mcginity, 69 F.4th at 1098.

1 As such, Plaintiff has failed to state a claim for violation of the CLRA, and the Court
2 dismisses the claim with prejudice. See Moore, 4 F.4th at 882–83 (“[W]here plaintiffs base
3 deceptive advertising claims on unreasonable or fanciful interpretations of labels or other
4 advertising, dismissal on the pleadings may well be justified.”). Because Plaintiff has
5 failed to state a plausible claim of deception, Plaintiff’s unjust enrichment and breach of
6 express warranty claims also fail. See Weiss, 838 F. App’x at 303 (affirming dismissal of
7 warranty claims premised on the “exact same representations as [the plaintiff’s] consumer
8 protection claim”); Girard, 316 F. App’x at 563 (an “unjust enrichment claim also fails”
9 when a defendant’s “non-deceptive advertising does not entitle [the plaintiff] to
10 restitutionary relief” (citation omitted)).

11 C. Standing to Pursue Injunctive Relief

12 Defendant moves to dismiss Plaintiff’s claim for injunctive relief on the grounds that
13 Plaintiff lacks standing to pursue such relief. (Doc. No. 23-1 at 25–28.) Plaintiff’s CLRA
14 claim seeks an order enjoining Defendant from engaging in alleged deceptive labeling
15 practices. (FAC at 22.) Prospective injunctive relief requires a plaintiff to show a threat
16 of future injury that is “actual and imminent, not conjectural or hypothetical.” Summers
17 v. Earth Island Inst., 555 U.S. 488, 493 (2009). “[A] previously deceived consumer may
18 have standing to seek an injunction against false advertising or labeling, even though the
19 consumer now knows or suspects that the advertising was false at the time of the original
20 purchase, because the consumer may suffer an ‘actual and imminent, not conjectural or
21 hypothetical’ threat of future harm.” Davidson, 889 F.3d at 969 (quoting Summers, 555
22 U.S. at 493). To establish standing, the previously deceived consumer must sufficiently
23 allege “an imminent or actual threat of future harm caused by [the] allegedly false
24 advertising,” such as a desire to purchase the product again in the future. Id. at 970.

25 Upon review of Plaintiff’s FAC, Plaintiff does not sufficiently allege that he seeks
26 or intends to purchase Wiley Wallaby Very Berry Licorice again. (See FAC ¶ 73
27 (“Defendant [sic] would like to purchase the Products and other products produced by
28 Plaintiff [sic] in the future, but cannot currently do so because he cannot rely on the

1 Products’ labelling, given the deceptions regarding flavoring found there.”.) And even
2 construing this allegation in the light most favorable to Plaintiff, Plaintiff yet again fails to
3 allege any facts in his FAC that plausibly demonstrates “a real and immediate” threat of
4 repeated injury in the future. (See FAC); Chapman v. Pier 1 Imports (U.S.) Inc., 631 F.3d
5 939, 953 (9th Cir. 2011). Plaintiff’s future harm is thus “conjectural or hypothetical” and
6 not “actual and imminent.” Summers, 555 U.S. at 493.

7 Plaintiff cites to Davidson arguing that it supports his argument that he has standing
8 to bring a claim for injunctive relief. (Doc. No. 25 at 29.) Davidson is distinguishable
9 because the plaintiff in that case alleged a desire to purchase the product again. See
10 Davidson, 889 F.3d at 971. Plaintiff failed to do so here. (See FAC ¶ 73.) And even
11 assuming Plaintiff had sufficiently alleged a desire to purchase the product again, unlike in
12 Davidson, in which the plaintiff faced a future injury because she still could not rely on the
13 defendant’s claims about its products’ “flushability” without first purchasing and using the
14 flushable wipes, 889 F.3d at 971–72, Plaintiff admits that he now has knowledge that
15 enables him to make an appropriate choice with respect to Wiley Wallaby Very Berry
16 Licorice. (See FAC ¶¶ 22–28, 42–43); see also Fernandez, 2018 WL 280028, at *15
17 (holding that the plaintiff lacked standing to pursue injunctive relief because the plaintiff
18 “now [knew] how Atkins goes about calculating its net carbs claims, and she will not be
19 misled next time she goes to Wal-Mart or Target and looks at Atkins’s labels”). Thus,
20 there is no longer any risk that Plaintiff will be misled the next time he looks at a Wiley
21 Wallaby Very Berry Licorice label.

22 Plaintiff attempts to cure these deficiencies by alleging that he “has not merely
23 alleged an ‘informational’ injury, but has also alleged that Defendant has been enabled to
24 charge a price premium for the Products.” (FAC ¶ 74.) Thus, Plaintiff alleges that
25 compliance with the governing regulations would “cause a decrease in the price of the
26 Products at which Plaintiff and the Class would be willing to buy the Products.” (Id.) On
27 this basis, Plaintiff concludes that he has alleged an economic injury that “further supports
28 prospective injunctive relief.” (Id.) But again, Plaintiff admits that he has knowledge of

1 the product’s flavoring and ingredients. (See FAC ¶¶ 22–28, 42–43.) Thus, there is no
2 longer any risk that Plaintiff will be misled the next time he looks at the product’s label.
3 And again, Plaintiff’s allegation that an injunction would drive down the price of
4 Defendant’s product is based on pure conjecture and is insufficient to state a cognizable
5 claim for injunctive relief. See, e.g., Champan, 631 F.3d at 953; Summers, 555 U.S. at 493
6 (2009).

7 Accordingly, Plaintiff lacks standing to pursue his claim for injunctive relief and
8 that claim is dismissed. See, e.g., Davidson, 889 F.3d at 969; Brand v. KSF Acquisition
9 Corp., No. 22-cv-00392-LAB, 2023 WL 3225409, at *3 (S.D. Cal. Mar. 17, 2023)
10 (granting motion to dismiss claims for injunctive relief where the first amended complaint
11 failed to allege that the plaintiff intended to purchase the products again); Grausz v. Kroger
12 Co., No. 19-cv-00449-TWR-AGS, 2021 WL 5534706, at *6 (S.D. Cal. Jan. 22, 2021)
13 (holding that the plaintiff lacked standing to seek injunctive relief because “Plaintiff’s
14 professed intent to purchase Defendant’s Product in the future is wholly contingent on a
15 reformation of the Product,” making “the threat that Plaintiff would be unable to rely on
16 Defendant’s representation in the future [] too conjectural or hypothetical to establish
17 Article III standing”).

18 **D. Plaintiff’s Claims for Equitable Relief**

19 Next, Defendant moves to dismiss Plaintiff’s claims to the extent they seek equitable
20 relief, arguing that Plaintiff fails to allege inadequacy of legal remedies. (Doc. No. 23-1
21 at 28–29.) The Court agrees. “[E]quitable relief is not appropriate where an adequate
22 remedy exists at law.” Schroeder v. U.S., 569 F.3d 956, 963 (9th Cir 2009). A plaintiff
23 “must establish that []he lacks an adequate remedy at law before securing equitable
24 restitution for past harm under the . . . CLRA.” Sonner v. Premier Nutrition Corp., 971
25 F.3d 834, 844 (9th Cir. 2020) (citations omitted).

26 Here, Plaintiff’s CLRA claim seeks relief in the form of monetary damages in
27 addition to equitable relief. (FAC ¶¶ 79, 80.) Plaintiff also alleges an unjust enrichment
28 claim, which seeks equitable relief. (Id. ¶¶ 81–88.) Upon review of Plaintiff’s FAC,

1 Plaintiff has failed to plead any facts establishing that he lacks an adequate remedy at law.
2 (See FAC.) “[A] party seeking equitable relief must specifically plead the inadequacy of
3 monetary damages in federal court.” Martinez v. Ford Motor Co., No. 22-cv-01082-MMA,
4 2022 WL 14118926, at *8 (S.D. Cal. Oct. 24, 2022) (citations omitted). Plaintiff failed to
5 do so here.

6 Plaintiff argues that his claims for equitable relief are pleaded in the alternative and
7 such alternative pleading is permitted under the law. (Doc. No. 25 at 31.) While Plaintiff
8 may plead claims for equitable relief in the alternative at the pleading stage,
9 see Johnson-Jack v. Health-Ade LLC, 587 F. Supp. 3d 957, 976 (N.D. Cal. 2022),
10 “[P]laintiff must, at a minimum, plead that []he lacks adequate remedies at law if []he seeks
11 equitable relief.” Guthrie v. Transamerica Life Ins. Co., 561 F. Supp. 3d 869, 875 (N.D.
12 Cal. 2021) (emphasis removed) (citations omitted); see also Martinez, 2022 WL 14118926,
13 at *8. And again, Plaintiff’s FAC contains no allegations establishing that Plaintiff’s legal
14 remedies are inadequate. (See FAC.) Accordingly, to the extent Plaintiff’s claims seek
15 equitable relief, they are dismissed because Plaintiff failed to state a claim for equitable
16 relief. See, e.g., Sonner, 971 F.3d at 844; Freund v. HP, Inc., No. 22-cv-03794-BLF, 2023
17 WL 187506, at *6 (N.D. Cal. Jan. 13, 2023) (granting motion to dismiss claims for
18 equitable relief because the plaintiffs failed to plead that they lack an adequate remedy at
19 law).

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CONCLUSION

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2 For the reasons above, the Court grants Defendant’s motion to dismiss, and the Court
3 dismisses Plaintiff’s FAC. Because the deficiencies identified above cannot be cured by
4 amendment of the FAC, the Court dismisses Plaintiff’s FAC without leave to amend. See
5 Telesaurus VPC, LLC v. Power, 623 F.3d 998, 1003 (9th Cir. 2010) (“A district court may
6 deny a plaintiff leave to amend if it determines that ‘allegation of other facts consistent
7 with the challenged pleading could not possibly cure the deficiency.’” (citation omitted)).
8 The Clerk is directed to close the case.

9 **IT IS SO ORDERED.**

10 DATED: September 12, 2024

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13 MARILYN L. HUFF, District Judge
14 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
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