
Subcommittee Approves Safe Drinking Water for Healthy Communities Act of 2007

The Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials today approved H.R. 1747, the "Safe Drinking Water for Healthy Communities Act of 2007." The legislation would amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to require the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to create a national drinking water standard for perchlorate.

NEWS RELEASE

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman

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Washington, D.C.- The Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials today approved H.R. 1747, the "Safe Drinking Water for Healthy Communities Act of 2007." The legislation would amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to require the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to create a national drinking water standard for perchlorate. The legislation was approved by voice vote.

"For almost a decade EPA has delayed taking action to place safe limitations on the amount of perchlorate that is present in our drinking water," said Rep. Albert Wynn (D-MD), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials. "Because of the detrimental public health and environmental impacts of perchlorate we can no longer wait for EPA to take action. The time to regulate perchlorate is now."

Highly soluble and mobile, perchlorate moves easily from soil to surface and drinking water. EPA data shows that

perchlorate is known to have contaminated at least 153 public water systems in 26 states.

If ingested, perchlorate can have a devastating impact on human health by impairing the thyroid gland's ability to produce vitally important hormones. Impairment of the thyroid in pregnant women can affect fetal development and cause decreased learning capabilities. Additionally, nursing mothers unknowingly can transfer perchlorate to their children via breast milk. Recent data has revealed that one out of sixteen one year-olds have been effected by perchlorate contamination.

"When a Federal agency fails to properly exercise its authorities and responsibilities, Congress must force action," said Rep. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. "Regulating perchlorate is a critical step toward improving our drinking water supply and safeguarding the public health. We can not afford to wait any longer for the EPA to act."

The Department of Defense (DOD) and defense industry have used perchlorate for decades in the manufacturing, testing, and firing of rockets and missiles. In fact, perchlorate contamination is present at 61 DOD sites across the country.

EPA has recognized the potential health danger perchlorate presents to the public since 1998, when it was placed on the Contaminant Candidate List (CCL); yet, nearly ten years later, the agency has not taken protective action.

"The scientific evidence that a drinking water standard for perchlorate is clear. Without a standard our nation's drinking water supply will continue to be exposed to unnecessary risks," said Rep. Hilda Solis (D-CA). "Today's passage of H.R. 1747 is a step closer to protecting the health of pregnant women and children from the negative health effects caused by perchlorate."

H.R. 1747 would require EPA to regulate perchlorate levels in drinking water within 12 months of enactment.

The bill will now be sent to the full committee.

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Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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