



## Senator Feinstein Seeks to Address Nationwide Perchlorate Problem

December 22, 2004

**Washington, DC** – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) announced plans today to introduce legislation to address the problem of perchlorate contamination in food and water supplies across the country when the Senate convenes in January.

**“In California, perchlorate has been found in more than 350 drinking water sources,”** Senator Feinstein said. **“It has seeped into the Colorado River and last month, the FDA reported that perchlorate was detected at numerous locations around the country. This is not just a California problem. It is a national problem.”**

The FDA study, released in November, found perchlorate in 90 percent of lettuce samples taken in California, Arizona, Texas, Florida, and New Jersey and 101 of 104 milk samples taken at retail stores around the country.

A study by the Environmental Working Group, released in June, revealed the penetration of perchlorate into the food chain in 32 out of 32 milk samples found in California. The study also determined the average perchlorate concentration to be at 5.85 parts per billion, almost six times as high as the Environmental Protection Agency's provisional daily safe dose.

**“It is imperative that we reduce the perchlorate in our drinking water and protect Californians, especially pregnant women, the unborn, infants, and young children, from this threat to their health,”** Senator Feinstein added. **“There is much more work to do to determine the scope and the severity of the contamination across the country.”**

Perchlorate is a chemical used in rocket fuel and munitions. It is a highly soluble salt that can readily permeate through soils. Perchlorate was widely used by the Defense Department and its contractors in the 1950s and 1960s.

Previously practiced disposal methods such as burning, open detonation, and use of high-pressure water to wash it out of rockets, has allowed perchlorate to seep into surface and groundwater supplies over the last 50 years. Perchlorate has now been identified as a contaminant of drinking water sources or in the environment in 34 states.

High levels of perchlorate impede thyroid hormone production by interfering with iodine uptake. Insufficient thyroid hormone production during early stages in life can permanently damage a child's physical and mental development.

The legislation that Senator Feinstein plans to introduce in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress would:

- authorize \$200 million to identify and clean up the sources of perchlorate,
- provide grants for the research and development of better cleanup technologies,
- create an Interagency Task Force to coordinate federal activities regarding water sources nationwide,
- require EPA to set a national primary drinking water standard for perchlorate, and
- make perchlorate polluting entities responsible for contamination cleanup efforts.

Senator Feinstein became aware of widespread concerns about perchlorate in the water supply based on tests performed in the fall of 2002. This year she was able to secure \$2.775 million in appropriations funding to research the scope of perchlorate contamination in California and to clean up wells that have been contaminated. Senator Feinstein secured an additional \$6.5 million in perchlorate cleanup funding as part of the Defense Department's appropriations bill. The funding includes:

- \$4 million for the Environmental Security Technical Certification Program to conduct perchlorate research and demonstrate cleanup technologies in California's Rialto-Colton Basin, and
- \$2.5 million, requested by Senator Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), for wellhead treatment where perchlorate contaminated water is pumped out, treated and then passed along back into the water supply system.

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