



Statement of Senator Feinstein Criticizing  
EPA for Weak Perchlorate Remediation Standard  
January 26, 2006

**“I was surprised and disappointed today that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a preliminary remediation goal for perchlorate cleanup at 24.5 parts per billion (ppb). This preliminary standard is unacceptable and could put the health of thousands of Americans at risk. It also ignores perchlorate contamination in food.**

**The fact that California, the largest state in the union, has set a target for perchlorate remediation at 6 ppb for drinking water, and considers exposure to perchlorate contamination from both water and food sources should cause real concern.**

**By contrast, the EPA preliminary standard is four times higher and wrongly assumes that perchlorate contamination is found only in drinking water, without accounting for the ingestion of perchlorate from milk, fruits, and vegetables.**

**Additionally, this preliminary standard converts the EPA reference dose to a drinking water level, based on the consumption of water for a 155 pound (or 70 kilogram) adult. So this doesn’t accurately reflect the risk to children, pregnant women and their unborn children.**

**I will be asking the EPA to reconsider this preliminary decision and will continue working with officials from California and throughout the nation to address this growing problem.”**

### **Background**

In sufficient doses, perchlorate, a chemical used for explosives, rockets, and missiles, has been shown to impair thyroid function and result in neurological impairment of fetuses and babies, metabolic disorders and other problems. Nationwide monitoring has found that perchlorate has endangered the water supply of 35 States, including California.

In November 2004, the Food and Drug Administration reported detecting perchlorate in 90% of lettuce samples collected in California, Arizona, Texas, Florida and New Jersey. Additionally, 101 out of 104 milk samples purchased from retail stores around the country, including Pennsylvania, Georgia, Louisiana, Washington, Missouri, Texas and Kansas, contained perchlorate.

Children may be vulnerable to perchlorate because it has been shown to reduce the production of thyroid hormone. This hormone plays a critical role in development, and insufficient levels can permanently damage a child’s physical and mental abilities.