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May 7, 2008

Administrator Stephen L. Johnson
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Ariel Rios Building
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Johnson,

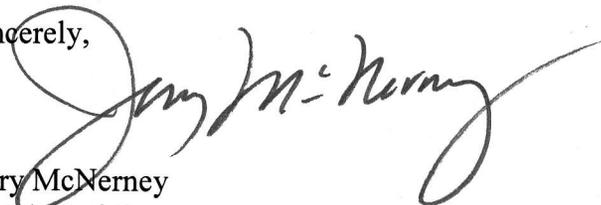
I am disturbed at recent suggestions made by the Assistant Administrator for Water at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which indicate that your agency may fail to act in ridding the Nation's water supply of perchlorate.

The harmful effects of perchlorate are no longer in doubt; even the lowest levels of exposure to this chemical harm small children and pregnant mothers. Unfortunately, perchlorate is pervasive in large portions of the country. A recent Food and Drug Administration study found that nearly 300 commonly consumed foods and beverages are contaminated with perchlorate, a toxic component of rocket fuel that interferes with thyroid function and poses developmental health risks. This contamination is at levels that place the health of millions of young children at risk every day. It is well past time for the EPA to act.

In the absence of a national perchlorate standard, individual states have implemented their own thresholds for consumption, leading to a confusing patchwork of regulation. According to recent research, every proposed or final drinking water standard, except the Massachusetts standard of two parts per billion, fails to protect the average two-year old from all sources of routine, daily exposure to perchlorate.

There is no more basic function of your agency than to protect Americans of all ages, and we need to make sure that children, who are the most vulnerable to perchlorate, are safe from ingesting dangerous pollutants. I strongly recommend that you make clear the intention of the EPA with regard to a national perchlorate standard and work with Congress to provide the appropriate level of protection to families throughout the country. I appreciate your consideration of this request, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress