

PRESS RELEASE

EPA Plan on Rocket Fuel in Drinking Water Will Make You Sick

May 23, 2019

MEDIA CONTACTS

Anne Hawke

646-823-4518, ahawke@nrdc.org

Margie Kelly

541-222-9699, mkelly@nrdc.org

Emily Deanne

202-717-8288, edeanne@nrdc.org

WASHINGTON – The Environmental Protection Agency issued a [proposed standard](#) to limit perchlorate in drinking water that will gravely threaten public

health. The agency's plan comes after a decade of delay and a lawsuit by NRDC compelling it to set a standard. Perchlorate, a toxic chemical that is a component of rocket fuel, has been detected in the drinking water systems that serve up to 16.6 millions Americans. Even at low levels, it can present serious health risks to children and pregnant women.

The following is a statement by Erik Olson, senior director for Health and Food at the Natural Resources Defense Council:

“This is enough to make you sick—literally. As a result, millions of Americans will be at risk of exposure to dangerous levels of this toxic chemical in their drinking water. Fetuses and infants are especially vulnerable to harm from perchlorate. EPA has more than tripled the amount of perchlorate it now recommends allowing in water. Scientists recommend a limit that is 10 to more than 50 times lower than what the agency is proposing. This is another Trump administration gift to polluters and water utilities that have lobbied to be off the hook for cleaning up the problem.”

BACKGROUND

EPA is proposing a standard of 56 parts per billion—more than 3 times its own previous limit of 15 parts per billion. State standards based on scientists' recommendations set the limit dramatically lower—2 parts per billion (Massachusetts) and 6 parts per billion (California).

Perchlorate impairs hormone production critical to brain development. It has been widely used by the military and defense industries. It is commonly used

not just in rocket fuel, but also fireworks and explosives. It is highly soluble in water, and can move quickly into ground and surface water when it contaminates soil.

The EPA has revised drinking water standards since the 1996 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act, but this is the first new standard the agency is putting forward for an unregulated contaminant in more than 23 years.

For more on NRDC's lawsuit that triggered the agency's action, click [here](#).

###

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is an international nonprofit environmental organization with more than 3 million members and online activists. Since 1970, our lawyers, scientists, and other environmental specialists have worked to protect the world's natural resources, public health, and the environment. NRDC has offices in New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Bozeman, MT, and Beijing. Visit us at www.nrdc.org and follow us on Twitter [@NRDC](https://twitter.com/NRDC).

SUPPORT OUR WORK

\$35

\$50

\$75

\$100

\$200

OTHER

[DONATE](#)

JOIN US

Enter Email

SUBMIT

When you sign up you'll become a member of NRDC's Activist Network. We will keep you informed with the latest alerts and progress reports.

We use cookies to personalise content and ads, to provide social media features and to analyse our traffic. We also share information about your use of our site with our social media, advertising and analytics partners. — [Privacy and Cookie Policy](#)

✓ Accept Cookies