

Please support the SF 188 Test and Report Phthalates in Packaged Food bill authored by Senator Heather Gustafson. The bill would require food manufacturers to test their packaged food products for phthalates, report the results to the Department of Agriculture and post them on their website so consumers can know what foods have this toxic chemical.

Phthalates are chemicals that are added to plastic to make it more flexible. But these chemicals leach out into our food and drinks from packaging, food processing equipment, contaminated soil and water. Consumer Reports tested food for phthalates and found them in almost all 85 items tested. In particular, Annie's Cheesy Ravioli, General Mills Yoplait and Cheerios, Green Giant Cream Style Corn and Progresso Vegetable soup had unacceptably high levels of phthalates.

The presence of phthalates in many of our foods is very alarming. They are known Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs) that disrupt our hormone system which is essential for regulating body functions. Research has found the following potential health effects: Reduced testosterone levels; reduced fertility in men and women; decreased cognitive development, lower I.Q. and possible link to ADHD and behavioral problems in children; changed endocrine and thyroid hormone functions; damaged liver and kidneys; respiratory and asthma conditions; allergies; type 2 diabetes; obesity; high blood pressure; high cholesterol; cardiovascular disease, possible greater risk for stroke or heart attack; breast, prostate and reproductive cancers; greater risk for disease for their children later in life from phthalate exposure in pregnant women.

States have growing concern about the health harms from phthalates to the extent that 3 states, California, Maine and Vermont have already passed legislation banning, controlling or limiting phthalates in food packaging. Additionally, last year, Michigan introduced legislation to ban phthalates in food packaging. The EPA has already highlighted health concerns with phthalates, designating multiple phthalates as High-Priority Substances for risk evaluation under the Toxic Substances Control Act and toxic pollutants under Section 307 (a)(1) of the Clean Water Act. Additionally, under the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has banned the use of multiple types of phthalates at concentrations greater than 0.1 percent in toys and children's articles due to harmful levels of toxicity. Further, the CPSC has found, and EPA has affirmed, that diet is the primary source of exposure to phthalates for women, infants, toddlers, and children.

It is certainly time for us to address the harm to our health from phthalates. Please support bill SF 188. Thank you.

Sincerely,