

EPA's perchlorate goal is criticized

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A panel of scientists says a proposed federal limit of 24.5 parts per billion on the toxic chemical perchlorate in drinking water is too high.

The federal advisory panel said the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's health goal for the chemical that has contaminated drinking water and foods across the nation poses neurodevelopmental risks for babies, The Los Angeles Times reported Thursday. Most of the perchlorate contamination occurs near military bases or aerospace facilities.

The scientists say the proposed limit for perchlorate, an ingredient of solid rocket fuel, "is not supported by the underlying science and can result in exposures that pose neurodevelopmental risks in early life," wrote Melanie Marty of California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, chairwoman of the EPA's Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee.

Another EPA scientific advisory panel this year criticized the Bush administration for proposing a standard for another pollutant, saying it would not adequately protect public health, the Times said.

In contrast, California recently proposed a goal of 6 ppb, and this week Massachusetts officials proposed a standard of 2 ppb for perchlorate.

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