

**California Communities Against Toxics\* Clean Water Action  
Committee to Bridge the Gap \*Sierra Club California**

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**Schwarzenegger Administration Fails Important Environmental Test  
Bows to Industry on Perchlorate Drinking Water Standard**

The Schwarzenegger Administration has failed one of the first important tests of its commitment to public health, grass-grassroots environmental groups charged today, by bending to industry pressure and setting a public health goal (PHG) for perchlorate that is not health protective.

Perchlorate, a toxic material found in solid rocket fuel, disrupts thyroid function and development, particularly in fetuses, infants and children. Perchlorate contamination migrating from industries that handled per chlorate sloppily threatens drinking water used by millions of Californians. Clean-up costs faced by polluters if required to clean up water sources they have contaminated should not overshadow the substantial health impacts threatening the public if the polluters succeed in using their political clout to permit higher levels of perchlorate in water.

The U.S. EPA, after years of reviewing the toxicity data, proposed a public health goal of 1 part per billion (ppb) for perchlorate. The California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) solicited comment on where in the less-protective range of 2 –6 ppb to set the state PHG. Today, OEHHA announced it is setting the PHG at the outside upper end of that range –6 ppb. Furthermore, the Administration has said it may drag out to 18 months the setting of an enforceable drinking water standard, which takes into account cost and feasibility and will probably be even weaker than the public health goal. Delay has been a key goal of industry.

“The lead lobbyist for the perchlorate polluters like Lockheed Martin, Aerojet, and Kerr-McGee is James Strock, a former Wilson Administration CAL-EPA head who advised Schwarzenegger during the campaign and during the transition. He has been pushing the Governor’s office to relax and delay the perchlorate standard for his polluter clients. Although the polluters did not get everything they wanted, they did get a lot, and now they will lobby for an even weaker drinking water standard. Governor Schwarzenegger caved to industry on this one,” said Bill Magavern, senior legislative representative for Sierra Club California.

“This environmental backsliding –clearly in response to pressure from perchlorate polluters –will mean that significant numbers of Californians, including very vulnerable infants, will be drinking water with perchlorate that is unsafe,” said Lena Brook, Interim California Director, Clean Water Action. “Many water sources, from the Colorado River to wells in Santa Clara County, have levels between 4 and 6 ppb. This decision could condemn people to drink that polluted water. We are outraged that industry lobbyists with ties to the administration can override environmental and public health concerns.”