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Babies Bear the Brunt of
Today’s FDA Mistake on Perchlorate

(Washington, D.C.)—Today, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced that the agency will continue to allow the chemical perchlorate to be added to dry food packaging, denying the request by Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) and other public health advocates for a public hearing on the science that FDA used in its approval decision.

A harmful chemical, perchlorate is a rocket fuel component used since the Cold War. “The FDA’s decision to continue allowing the neurotoxic chemical perchlorate in food packaging is a big mistake—babies bear the brunt of the risk and impact,” said Jane Houlihan, Research Director for Healthy Babies Bright Futures. “With FDA’s failure to protect children, it falls on perchlorate maker BASF to do the right thing and withdraw this unnecessary chemical from the food packaging market.”

In 2005, the FDA approved its use as an antistatic in plastic food packaging and in 2016 expanded the approval to cover dry food handling equipment. Perchlorate is also a breakdown product of hypochlorite used to disinfect food processing equipment.

Perchlorate levels in children’s food have increased dramatically since the FDA’s 2005 decision. Perchlorate disrupts thyroid functions critical to brain development and has been linked to IQ loss among children born to mothers with thyroid dysfunction, who are more vulnerable to perchlorate toxicity.

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ABOUT HEALTHY BABIES BRIGHT FUTURES
Healthy Babies Bright Futures (HBBF) is an alliance of nonprofit organizations, scientists and donors that designs and implements outcomes-based programs to measurably reduce babies’ exposures to toxic chemicals in the first 1,000 days of development. HBBF brings together the strongest and latest science, data analysis, critical thinking, performance measurement, campaign talent, communications skills and commitment to collaboration. For more information, please visit www.hbbf.org.