

EPA Seeks Public Comment on Possible Drinking Water Contaminants

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(Washington, D.C. - Feb. 20, 2008) EPA is asking for public comment on a list of 104 possible drinking water contaminants that may need to be regulated in the future to ensure the continued protection of drinking water. Under the Safe Drinking Water Act, EPA includes on the draft Contaminant Candidate List (CCL) currently unregulated contaminants that are known or anticipated to occur in public water systems and which may require regulation. This draft CCL, which is the third such listing, lists 93 chemical contaminants or groups and 11 microbes, and describes the process and basis for selecting these contaminants.

"EPA is casting a broader scientific net for potential regulation of chemicals and microbes in drinking water," said Assistant Administrator for Water Benjamin H. Grumbles. "EPA's proposed list of priority contaminants will advance sound science and public health by targeting research on certain chemicals and microbes and informing regulators on how best to reduce risk."

The CCL process was established by the 1996 Amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act as a mechanism to determine if new regulations are needed to protect drinking water. Under this process EPA conducts extensive research into the occurrence and health effects of the listed contaminants before issuing new regulations or standards. In developing the draft CCL 3, the agency implemented a new approach for selecting contaminants which builds upon evaluations used for previous lists and is based on substantial expert input early in the process and recommendations from a larger number of different groups including stakeholders, the National Research Council and the National Drinking Water Advisory Council.

The draft list includes chemicals used in commerce, pesticides, biological toxins, disinfection byproducts, and waterborne pathogens. The agency evaluated approximately 7,500 chemicals and microbes and selected 104 candidates for the final draft list based on their potential to pose health risks through drinking water exposure. The comment period is open for 90 days beginning the day of publication in the Federal Register.