

July 15, 2022

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Ambassador Susan Rice
Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden and Ambassador Rice,

The undersigned organizations thank President Biden for making hunger, health, and nutrition a priority for his Administration by sponsoring the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health. We strongly support efforts to end hunger, increase healthy eating and physical activity, and reduce diet-related diseases, such as obesity.

[Studies suggest](#) chemicals used in food and food packaging, like PFAS and BPA, may be contributing to our obesity epidemic and other health harms. Recent Congressional reports found baby foods sold in the U.S. contain dangerously high levels of toxic heavy metals that are known to cause permanent brain damage in children and are linked to cancer, cardiovascular disease, and other serious health harms. We urge the Biden Administration do the following to protect Americans from unsafe and inadequately tested food chemicals:

- 1. Close the loophole that allows chemical companies to introduce new chemicals into the U.S. food supply without FDA approval.** Many of the food chemicals currently used in the U.S. have never [undergone a safety review by FDA](#). Instead, the food industry [exploits a loophole](#) to bring new food chemicals to market without notifying FDA or securing formal FDA approval. This means that industry, not the FDA, is deciding what's safe for Americans to eat.
- 2. Require the FDA to identify and reassess existing food chemicals of concern.** FDA is not mandated to routinely reassess the safety of existing food chemicals, allowing chemicals to remain in use long after evidence emerges linking them to harm. Chemicals like PFAS, BPA, and phthalates remain in use despite the potential impacts of these chemicals on our metabolism and other health risks.
- 3. Quickly set mandatory limits on toxic metals in baby food.** Although the FDA has committed to set mandatory limits on lead, arsenic, cadmium, and mercury in baby food, FDA is moving too slowly and must demand testing and reporting by food companies.
- 4. Restore a fully empowered Deputy Commissioner for Food Safety to the FDA to reprioritize food safety.** A lack of central leadership on food safety has led to a series of major food safety [failures at FDA](#), including slow and inadequate responses to contamination of infant formula.

Food chemicals of concern present a clear threat to public health, and regulatory deficiencies are to blame. Chemicals in food combined with other pathways of exposure have a [disproportionate](#) impact on low-income and communities of color. Closing the loophole allowing new chemicals to enter our food without FDA oversight, requiring routine reassessment of food chemicals, and restoring a Deputy Commissioner of Food Safety will help resolve these deficiencies. We urge the Biden Administration to take these steps to better protect Americans from food chemicals of concern.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
Balanced
Bread for the World
Center for Environmental Health
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Clean Production Action
Consumer Federation of America
Consumer Reports
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Health Trust
Environmental Working Group
Healthy Babies Bright Futures
Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan
Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision
STOP Foodborne Illness
Toxic Free North Carolina