



Secular Maryland

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HB 97 - FAV

Baby Food - Toxic Heavy Metals - Testing and Labeling

Dear Chair Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Vice-Chair Bonnie Cullison, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

There is an ongoing need for consumer accessible information about the presence of heavy metals in the foods we purchase. Toxic metal exposure can be harmful to the developing brain. It's been linked with problems with learning, cognition, and behavior. Metals are found naturally in soil or released into water and soil as pollution. Metals can also get into food from food manufacturing, storage, transportation, and packaging.

A non-profit advocacy organization, Healthy Babies, Bright Futures, found that 95% of baby foods they tested contained some amount of toxic heavy metals 2019. In 2021, the Food and Drug Administration announced its Closer to Zero action plan "to reduce exposure to arsenic, lead, cadmium, and mercury from foods eaten by babies and young children – to as low as possible." But their target date of April 2022 has come and gone, and FDA has still not followed through on the proposed action levels in the foods babies eat.

Secular Maryland advocates matching government policy with the available empirical evidence. The evidence shows that toxic metals are harmful in quantities that are sometimes found in some of the groceries being consumed. Consumers should have the information we need to avoid those harms.

Respectfully,
Mathew Goldstein
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