

# Coalition for Safer Food Processing & Packaging

June 14, 2017

Bernardo Hees  
Chief Executive Officer  
The Kraft Heinz Company  
200 E. Randolph Street, Suite 7600  
Chicago, IL 60601

Re: **Chemicals of High Concern to Children's Health Found in Your Products**

Dear Mr. Hees:

We know that food safety is a high priority for your company and your customers. That's why, as a national coalition of consumer health advocates, we're asking you to eliminate toxic industrial chemicals known as *ortho*-phthalates from your food products. We will be beginning a public outreach effort to educate consumers about this issue.

We have detected *ortho*-phthalates (hereinafter "phthalates") in some of your products using validated analytical methods at a qualified independent laboratory. We would like to meet with you to share our test results and further discuss this food safety concern.

Our public outreach campaign will share the broad results of our testing. We are not planning on releasing product specific data to the public at present and would welcome the opportunity to discuss the data with you, but we need to hear back from you by June 30 as discussed below.

Phthalates are widely used in food processing, food packaging and other products, from which they readily escape, often ending up in America's favorite foods. For pregnant women and young children, who are the most vulnerable groups, food is often the number one source of phthalates exposure. And fatty foods, including dairy products, tend to be the greatest contributor of dietary exposure to phthalates.<sup>1</sup>

Many scientists believe that current levels of exposure to phthalates are unsafe, especially for vulnerable populations.<sup>2</sup> Since almost all Americans are exposed daily to phthalates,<sup>3</sup> the potential health impacts may be great. Cumulative exposure to five phthalates reaches unacceptable levels in up to 600,000 American women of reproductive age, according to government experts, based on just one measure of fetal toxicity.<sup>4</sup>

Physicians and health scientists have raised serious concerns about the harm that elevated phthalate exposure poses to the developing brain and male reproductive organs during pregnancy. Studies in children have linked prenatal exposure to some phthalates with neurodevelopmental problems including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)-like behavior, antisocial behavior (e.g., aggression and depression), and poor learning and memory.<sup>5</sup> Other studies found that boys exposed prenatally to certain

phthalates were more likely to have genital birth defects that have serious health implications.<sup>6</sup> Laboratory studies confirm and strengthen these findings.<sup>7</sup>

Phthalates are high production volume chemicals that are widely used as plasticizers (to soften synthetic polymers like plastic and rubber), solvents, and as chemical production aids. Phthalates migrate into food from tubing, hoses, conveyor belts, gloves, seals, gaskets and other food processing equipment and materials; phthalates also migrate into food from their use in food packaging, including in adhesives, paper and paperboard, printer inks, coatings, and from sealants used on metal cans and lids.<sup>8</sup> Fortunately, safer alternatives are already commercially available for many uses of phthalates.<sup>9</sup>

As a major food product manufacturer, with your great power in the marketplace comes great responsibility. Given that phthalates are present in some of your products, and based on the best available science and growing consumer concern, we believe you should seek to eliminate all sources of these chemicals in your packaging, processing facilities, and entire supply chain. Therefore, **we respectfully request that you take the following actions:**

1. No later than June 30, agree to meaningfully engage with us in an ongoing dialogue aimed at eliminating the sources of phthalates present in your food products;
2. Within 12 months adopt an action plan to eliminate all sources of phthalates in your food products as soon as practicable. We believe the elements of that action plan should, at a minimum, include and be informed by:
  - a. An investigation to identify and characterize all sources of phthalates throughout your supply chain, manufacturing process, and packaging materials;
  - b. Adoption of a corporate policy to immediately end all *new* uses of phthalates in all *newly* acquired equipment, materials, supplies or facilities by your company and your suppliers, with certification that such new uses are free of phthalates;
  - c. An options analysis or engineering assessment that informs your priorities for substituting phthalates with safer alternatives for all sources, taking potential exposure reduction, costs, and feasibility into account;
  - d. A timeline with benchmarks for eliminating phthalates in your food products by a date certain; and
  - e. Public disclosure of the results of your investigation, policy adoption, options analysis, and action plan with timeline and benchmarks.

We appreciate the effort required to address the growing public concern with phthalates in the U.S. food supply. We can provide technical assistance to help you solve this problem.

We request a meeting at your earliest convenience to discuss these concerns and a strategy for timely ending the presence of phthalates in your food products. Please contact Patrick MacRoy at [pmacroy@preventharm.org](mailto:pmacroy@preventharm.org) or (207) 699-5796 for scheduling.

Letter to The Kraft Heinz Company from the Coalition for Safer Food Processing & Packaging

Thank you for your commitment to food safety and customer satisfaction. We look forward to your response by June 30.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Belliveau, Executive Director  
Environmental Health Strategy Center



Erik Olson, Director, Health Program  
Senior Strategic Director – Food and Ag.  
Natural Resources Defense Council



Mark A. Mitchell M.D., MPH, FACPM, Co-Chair  
National Medical Association Commission on  
Environmental Health



Peter Lehner, Senior Attorney  
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Patricia Lillie, President  
Learning Disabilities Association of America



Charlotte Brody, RN, National Director  
Healthy Babies Bright Futures



Gillian Z. Miller, PhD, Staff Scientist  
Ecology Center



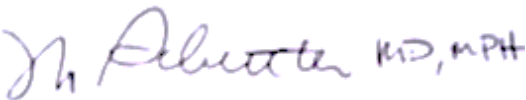
Andrew Kimbrell, Executive Director  
Center for Food Safety



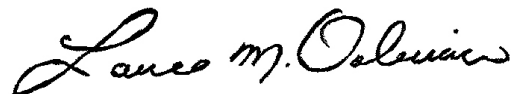
Lisa Y. Lefferts, MSPH, Senior Scientist  
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José Bravo, Executive Director,  
Just Transition Alliance & National  
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Sarah Doll, National Director  
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Cecil D. Corbin-Mark, Deputy Director  
WE ACT for Environmental Justice

Letter to The Kraft Heinz Company from the Coalition for Safer Food Processing & Packaging

cc: Howard Friedman, Head, U.S. Meat & Dairy Business, The Kraft Heinz Company  
Michael Mullen, Senior Vice President of Corporate and Government Affairs,  
The Kraft Heinz Company  
Kurt Deibel, VP Food Safety & Quality – Americas, The Kraft Heinz Company  
Marc Perrone, President, United Food and Commercial Workers International Union  
James Hoffa, Jr., General President, International Brotherhood of Teamsters

## Sources Cited:

<sup>1</sup> Serrano SE, Braun J, Trasande L, Dills R, Sathyanarayana S (2014) **Phthalates and diet: a review of food monitoring and epidemiology data**. *Environmental Health* 13:43 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/1476-069X-13-43>; See also Footnote 7, CHAP Report, Appendix E-3, Dietary Phthalate Exposure.

<sup>2</sup> Diamanti-Kandarakis E, Bourguignon J-P, Giuduce LC, Hauser R, Prins GS, Soto AM, Zoeller T, Gore AC (2009) **Endocrine-Disrupting Chemicals: An Endocrine Society Scientific Statement** *Endocrine Reviews* 30(4):293-342 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1210/er.2009-0002>; National Research Council (2009) **Science and Decisions: Advancing Risk Assessment**, Committee on Improving Risk Analysis Approaches Used by the U.S. EPA. <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/12209/science-and-decisions-advancing-risk-assessment>.

<sup>3</sup> Zota AR, Calafat AM, Woodruff TJ (2014) **Temporal Trends in Phthalate Exposures: Findings from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2001-2010** *Environmental Health Perspectives* 122(3):235-241 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1289/ehp.1306681>.

<sup>4</sup> CPSC. **Estimated Phthalate Exposure and Risk to Women of Reproductive Age as Assessed Using 2013/2014 NHANES Biomonitoring Data**, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, CPSC/EXHR/TR—17/XXX, February 2017. <https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/Estimated%20Phthalate%20Exposure%20and%20Risk%20to%20Women%20of%20Reproductive%20Age%20as%20Assessed%20Using%202013%202014%20NHANES%20Biomonitoring%20Data.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, **Project TENDR: Targeting Environmental NeuroDevelopmental Risks**: (1) Consensus Statement with endorsing scientific organizations: <http://projecttendr.com/consensus-statement/> (2) Project TENDR on Phthalates: <http://projecttendr.com/chemicals-and-pollutants/phthalates/>, and (3) Published report: Bennett D, Bellinger DC, Birnbaum LA, Bradman A, Chen A, Cory-Slechta DA, Engel SM, Fallin MD, Halladay A, Hauser R, Hertz-Picciotto I, Kwiatkowski CF, Lanphear BP, Marquez E, Marty M, McPartland J, Newschaffer CJ, Payne-Sturges D, Patisaul HB, Perera FP, Ritz B, Sass J, Schantz SL, Webster TF, Whyatt RM, Woodruff TJ, Zoeller RT, Anderko L, Campbell C, Conry JA, DeNicola N, Gould RM, Hirtz D, Huffling K, Landrigan PJ, Lavin A, Miller M, Mitchell MA, Rubin L, Schettler T, Tran HL, Acosta A, Brody C, Miller E, Miller P, Swanson M, Witherspoon NO. **Project TENDR: Targeting Environmental Neuro-Developmental Risks. The TENDR Consensus Statement**. *Environmental Health Perspectives* 124:A118-A122; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1289/EHP358>.

<sup>6</sup> Report to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission by the **Chronic Hazard Advisory Panel on Phthalates and Phthalates Alternatives**, July 2014, (“CHAP Report”); See pp. 27-29. <https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/CHAP-REPORT-With-Appendices.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> CHAP Report; See review and discussion of animal studies and laboratory data on pp. 13-27.

<sup>8</sup> Cao X-L (2010) **Phthalate Esters in Foods: Sources, Occurrence, and Analytical Methods**. *Comprehensive Reviews in Food Science and Food Safety* 9(1):21-43. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-4337.2009.00093.x>.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Lott S (2014) **Phthalate-free Plasticizers in PVC**, Healthy Building Network. <https://www.healthybuilding.net/uploads/files/phthalate-free-plasticizers-in-pvc.pdf>.