

## TESTIMONY

**Dr. Michael Hansen, Senior Scientist  
in support of HF 44**

**Committee on Agriculture Finance and Policy  
Minnesota House of Representatives**

**March 19, 2025**

Dear Chairman Hansen/Anderson and Committee members,

My name is Michael Hansen, Senior Scientist at Consumer Reports (CR). We appreciate the opportunity to comment on House File 44, which would require food manufacturers and brand owners to test packaged food for levels of ortho-phthalates and publicly report those results on their websites. We strongly support HF 44.

Founded in 1936, [Consumer Reports](#) (CR) is an independent, nonprofit and nonpartisan organization that works with consumers to create a fair and just marketplace. Known for its rigorous testing and ratings of products, CR advocates for laws and company practices that put consumers first. CR is dedicated to amplifying the voices of consumers to promote safety, digital rights, financial fairness, and sustainability. The organization surveys millions of Americans every year, reports extensively on the challenges and opportunities for today's consumers, and provides ad-free content and tools to 6 million members across the U.S.

Ortho-phthalates are chemicals that are plasticizers, substances added to plastic to make it more flexible and durable. But these chemicals don't just stay in the plastic, they can leach out and get into our food and drinks. Ortho-phthalates can enter not only through packaging but also throughout the entire food chain, via exposure from plastic in tubing, conveyor belts, and vinyl gloves or from meat and produce via contaminated soil and water.

Growing research has shown that ortho-phthalates are endocrine disruptors, e.g., chemicals that interfere with the production of various hormones, including estrogen. Even very small changes in hormone levels can lead to increased risk of diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease, certain cancers, birth defects, premature birth, neurodevelopmental disorders, and infertility.

Given the increased concerns over health effects of ortho-phthalates, and the fact that 8 ortho-phthalates were banned for use in children's toys due to the health concern, Consumer Report conducted a [study](#) of phthalate levels in packaged foods, which was published in January

2024. We tested samples of 85 different foods for 10 different ortho-phthalates. We included prepared meals, fruits and vegetables, milk and other dairy products, baby food, fast food, meat, and seafood, all packaged in cans, pouches, foil, or other material. We found ortho-phthalates in 84 of the 85 items we tested, with many products having levels above which research has linked to health problems.

Given the potential health problems associated with consumption of ortho-phthalates, and our own findings of ortho-phthalates in 84 of 85 foods tested, we strongly support HF 44, which would require the companies to test packaged food products for ortho-phthalates and post those results to their website so they are available to consumers. By posting the levels of ortho-phthalates in their food products, consumers can use this information to make more informed choices about the packaged foods they consume, which would encourage companies to reduce phthalate levels.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today. Consumer Reports urges the committee to approve this bill.

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Senior Scientist  
Consumer Reports

Attached: Consumer Reports [study](#): The Plastics Hiding in Your Food.