# TESTIMONY

## Dr. Michael Hansen, Senior Scientist
## in support of SF 188

## Committee on Agriculture, Veterans, Broadband, & Rural Development
## Minnesota Senate

**April 21, 2025**

Dear Chairman Putnam and Committee members,

My name is Michael Hansen, Senior Scientist at Consumer Reports (CR). We appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate File 188, 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 Senate File 188.

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. We have more than 47,000 members in Minnesota.

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. National biomonitoring data show that the primary source of ortho-phthalates for most people in the U.S., including infants and children is food consumption.[1]

Growing research has shown that ortho-phthalates are endocrine disruptors, e.g., chemicals that interfere with the production of various hormones, including testosterone and estradiol. Even very small changes in hormone levels can lead to increased risk of diabetes, obesity,

[1] https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0160412017314666#

cardiovascular disease, certain cancers, birth defects, premature birth, neurodevelopmental disorders, and infertility. There are epidemiological studies showing elevated phthalate levels in pregnant women are linked to adverse health impacts in their offspring, including problems with fetal development and potential disruptions to cognitive function and behavior.[2]

Given the increased concerns over health effects of ortho-phthalates, and the fact that the Consumer Product Safety Commission banned 8 ortho-phthalates for use in children's toys and child care products 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 SF 188, 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.

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

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Consumer Reports

Attached: Consumer Reports study: The Plastics Hiding in Your Food.

[2] https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/epdf/10.2105/AJPH.2020.306014