

March 18, 2026

Chair Weber Pierson
Senate Health Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 3310
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1033: Protein products (Padilla) – Support

Dear Chair Weber Pierson and Members of the Senate Health Committee,

The Center for Science in the Public Interest and Harvard Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders (STRIPED) are pleased to support [SB 1033](#) (Padilla), which requires manufacturers of certain protein products to test for heavy metals and publicly disclose test results.¹

Protein products, including powders and beverages, are often consumed by adults, adolescents, athletes, and families. However, a Consumer Reports investigation recently found that multiple protein powders and beverages contained detectable levels of arsenic, cadmium, and lead, some with concerning high levels.²

This information is alarming, as exposure to heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, mercury, and arsenic can have serious and potentially permanent health consequences. Each of these toxic metals are currently listed in California Proposition 65 for cancer and/or developmental/reproductive toxicity.^{3,4,5,6,7,8,9} Cadmium is also known to cause kidney and bone damage.¹⁰ Arsenic exposure is linked to behavioral problems and lower IQ in kids. Chronic arsenic intake may lead to skin, bladder, or lung cancer.¹¹ Lead can cause potentially permanent damage to the developing brain, resulting in lower IQ, attention deficits, or behavioral problems.¹² Yet consumers are often unaware of these risks due to a lack of mandatory testing and transparent disclosure. SB 1033 addresses this problem by requiring protein products to be appropriately tested for heavy metals and the information made available to the public.

California has long led the nation in protecting public health through transparency and accountability measures, including passage of AB 899 (2023) and AB 646 (2026), which require toxic element testing in baby food and prenatal vitamins, respectively.¹³ SB 1033 builds on that progress by empowering consumers with vital information they need to protect themselves and their families from harmful heavy metal contamination in protein products.

We urge your “AYE” vote on SB 1033.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jensen Jose', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Bryn Austin', with a large, stylized initial 'S'.

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REFERENCES

- ¹ SB-1033 Protein products (2025-2026). https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260SB1033.
- ² Martineau, Paris. *High Levels of Lead in Protein Powder and Shakes*. October 14, 2025. Consumer Reports. <https://www.consumerreports.org/lead/protein-powders-and-shakes-contain-high-levels-of-lead-a4206364640/>.
- ³ California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. *Lead*. Proposition 65. <https://oehha.ca.gov/proposition-65/chemicals/lead>.
- ⁴ California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. *Lead and Lead Compounds*. Proposition 65. <https://oehha.ca.gov/proposition-65/chemicals/lead-and-lead-compounds>.
- ⁵ California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. *Arsenic (inorganic arsenic compounds)*. Proposition 65. <https://oehha.ca.gov/proposition-65/chemicals/arsenic-inorganic-arsenic-compounds>.
- ⁶ California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. *Cadmium*. Proposition 65. <https://oehha.ca.gov/proposition-65/chemicals/cadmium>.
- ⁷ California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. *Cadmium and cadmium compounds*. Proposition 65. <https://oehha.ca.gov/proposition-65/chemicals/cadmium-and-cadmium-compounds>.
- ⁸ California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. *Mercury and mercury compounds*. Proposition 65. <https://oehha.ca.gov/proposition-65/chemicals/mercury-and-mercury-compounds>.
- ⁹ California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. *Methylmercury and methylmercury compounds*. Proposition 65. <https://oehha.ca.gov/proposition-65/chemicals/methylmercury-and-methylmercury-compounds>.
- ¹⁰ Agency for Toxic Substances Control and Disease Registry, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Toxicological Profile for Cadmium*. September 2021. Available: <https://wwwn.cdc.gov/TSP/ToxProfiles/ToxProfiles.aspx?id=48&tid=15>.
- ¹¹ US Food and Drug Administration. *Arsenic in Food*. March 5, 2024. <https://www.fda.gov/food/environmental-contaminants-food/arsenic-food>.
- ¹² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *NTP Monograph on Health Effects of Low-Level Lead*. June 13, 2012. https://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/sites/default/files/ntp/ohat/lead/final/monographhealtheffectslowlevellead_newissn_508.pdf.
- ¹³ AB-899 Food safety: baby food (2023-2024). https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB899; SB-646 Prenatal multivitamins (2025-2026). https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260SB646.