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March 12, 2008

Stephen L. Johnson
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Johnson:

As you know, the Associated Press this week reported the results of an extensive investigation it conducted on drinking water supplies across the country. The results of this investigation – that a wide variety of pharmaceuticals is present in the water supplies of 24 major metropolitan areas – was shocking and concerning to millions of Americans, including residents of my home state, New Jersey. These reports make us all wonder about the safety of our water supply and whether the EPA has done its own investigation of this issue.

To that end, I am writing to ask what sort of recent testing your agency has done for pharmaceuticals in the nation's drinking water and whether the EPA has any plans to work with the FDA to determine whether the presence of these agents pose any health hazards to anyone – especially children, the elderly, and other vulnerable populations. The Associated Press's investigation was illuminating and a great service, but it was not an official governmental study, and I doubt your agency will act on an outside group's findings. If there are pharmaceuticals in our water, our government should be fully aware of the problem and working to correct it.

Has your agency conducted testing similar to the Associated Press's? What have been the results? Are steps being taken to mitigate the presence of pharmaceuticals in the water or determine if these compounds pose any health risk?

A safe and clean supply of drinking water is a fundamental expectation for anyone living in a developed nation. Knowing that your agency is fully aware of the components of our water supply and is doing all it can to keep it clean is vital. I eagerly await your response.

Sincerely,



ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator