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NEWS RELEASE

GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES NEW REGULATIONS TO ENSURE BOTTLED WATER IS SAFE

Gov. Christie Whitman today announced new proposed amendments to state regulations for bottled water to ensure that bottled water sold in New Jersey is safe and meets established drinking water standards.

"As our society becomes increasingly health-conscious, more and more people are turning to bottled water as a beverage of choice," the Governor said. "From boardrooms to classrooms, diners to dugouts, bottles of water are becoming ubiquitous. During the bone-dry summer of 1999, bottled water has become even more in demand here in New Jersey."

"That's all the more reason we need to insist that bottled water is safe and meetings the drinking water standards our families deserve," she said. "The state monitors the quality of bottled water sold in New Jersey both from in-state and out-of- state bottlers. The standards we use are set by the Department of Environmental Protection and are among the strictest in the nation. These amendments will strengthen the program and go a long way toward assuring consumers that the water they buy is of the highest quality."

"We're boosting standards and enforcement because a healthy New Jersey is a strong New Jersey. We're letting our families feel sure it's safe to drink the water - whether it comes from the kitchen tap or the convenience store, whether it's bottled in the Garden State or the Golden State or anywhere in between," Gov. Whitman said.

The Governor said the proposed amendments will fully comply with federal standards and will fund regular inspections and spot checks of the bottlers.

"Perhaps, most significant, we will establish certification fees for water bottlers that will defray the cost of inspections and laboratory analysis of the water. Collecting these fees will enable us to do more spot checks, more analysis, and more inspections. It will also help us prepare the annual bottled water report required by state law," the Governor said.

The new amendments to the bottled water regulations of the Department of Health and Senior Citizens will be published in the State Register on Sept. 7, followed by a 30-day comment period before they can be adopted. The changes apply to 20 in-state water bottling companies as well as 230 from outside the state who sell water in New Jersey.

