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HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE - HSC

DIVISION 104. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH [106500 - 119406] (*Division 104 added by Stats. 1995, Ch. 415, Sec. 6.)*

PART 12. DRINKING WATER [116270 - 117130] (*Part 12 added by Stats. 1995, Ch. 415, Sec. 6.)*

CHAPTER 4.6. Safe and Affordable Drinking Water [116765 - 116772] (*Chapter 4.6 added by Stats. 2019, Ch. 120, Sec. 9.)*

ARTICLE 1. Findings and Declarations [116765- 116765.] (*Article 1 added by Stats. 2019, Ch. 120, Sec. 9.)*

116765. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

- (a) Every Californian should enjoy the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards. Every community should be a healthy environment in which to live, work, play, and learn.
- (b) No single group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences and adverse health impacts arising from industrial, governmental, or commercial operations or policies.
- (c) Concentrated environmental contamination in water creates cumulative health burdens resulting in communities with higher rates of disease such as asthma, heart disease, cancer, neurological and reproductive health effects, birth defects, and obesity.
- (d) Despite significant improvements in environmental protection over the past several decades, millions of Californians continue to live, work, play, and go to school in unhealthy environments.
- (e) California was one of the first states in the nation to put environmental justice considerations into law and defines environmental justice as the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.
- (f) California law also declares that it is the established policy of the state that every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes.
- (g) Yet, still more than 1,000,000 Californians do not have access to safe drinking water. In communities where the sole water supply is contaminated with substances like arsenic, manganese, nitrates, or hexavalent chromium, families are often left without safe water. The central valley and central coast regions, where more than 90% of the communities rely on groundwater as a primary source of drinking water, are particularly at risk, but other communities around the state are also at risk. More than 250,000 people in the central valley alone lack access to a consistent source of safe, affordable water.
- (h) The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 lists lead, arsenic, and hexavalent chromium as substances that can cause cancer and reproductive toxicity.
- (i) Established state environmental justice laws and policies are only effective insofar as they result in true parity.
- (j) It is the intent of the Legislature that the State of California bring true environmental justice to our state and begin to address the continuing disproportionate environmental burdens in the state by creating a fund to provide safe drinking water in every California community, for every Californian.
- (k) Climate change is exacerbating the water impacts on disadvantaged and environmentally burdened communities by reducing surface water flows, accelerating declining groundwater basins, and contributing to increasing concentrations of environmental contamination.
- (l) Enhancing the long-term sustainability of drinking water systems in disadvantaged and environmentally burdened communities increases those communities' resilience to climate change.
- (m) Funding for safe and affordable drinking water under this chapter promotes investments in disadvantaged communities, provides important contributions to those communities in adapting to climate change, and is an appropriate expenditure from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund created pursuant to Section 16428.8 of the Government Code.
- (n) It is the intent of the Legislature that the state board, in developing the fund expenditure plan pursuant to Article 4 (commencing with Section 116768), strive to ensure all regions of the state receive the same level of consideration for funding pursuant to this

chapter, to the extent practicable.

(Amended by Stats. 2020, Ch. 370, Sec. 210. (SB 1371) Effective January 1, 2021.)