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SCR-71 Fireworks Safety Month. (2015-2016)

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 71

CHAPTER 158

Relative to Fireworks Safety Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 04, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 71, Gaines. Fireworks Safety Month.

This measure would designate June 21, 2015, through July 21, 2015, as Fireworks Safety Month and would encourage the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and local fire protection agencies to educate members of the public about the risks of improperly using fireworks, including fireworks that have been approved as safe and sane.

Fiscal Committee: yes

WHEREAS, Many Californians and visitors to the state will be celebrating our nation's independence on July 4th with fireworks; and

WHEREAS, Fireworks were involved in an estimated 11,400 injuries treated in hospital emergency departments throughout the United States during 2013, with roughly 65 percent of those injuries being treated during the period between June 21 and July 21, inclusive; and

WHEREAS, Serious misuse of fireworks devices, as well as the use of illegal explosives, accounts for a large proportion of these injuries; and

WHEREAS, Children younger than 15 years of age accounted for approximately 26 percent of the injuries in the United States, with roughly 1,100 of reported injuries being caused by sparklers, 300 by bottle rockets, and 800 by firecrackers; and

WHEREAS, The parts of the body most often injured were hands, fingers, head, face, eyes, and legs, with burns representing the most common injury to all parts of the body, except that lacerations and foreign bodies occurred more frequently in the eyes; and

WHEREAS, Bodily injury is not the only damage that can occur from improper use of fireworks and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) has stated that improper use of fireworks during California's severe drought has caused wildfires; and

WHEREAS, CAL FIRE has already responded to 1,122 wildfires between January 2015 and May 2015, inclusive, that have burned 4,206 acres, nearly double the number of fires and acreage destroyed by this time in 2013, and therefore CAL FIRE is urging the public to enjoy only professional fireworks displays; and

WHEREAS, Since it can take hundreds of thousands of gallons of water to control a large wildfire, avoiding home use of fireworks is important not only for safety and wildfire prevention, but also to save precious water resources during this critical period of drought; and

WHEREAS, CAL FIRE has reminded those who choose to use fireworks to celebrate to make sure fireworks are allowed in the area of use and that users follow all safety precautions, because individuals not following these requirements can be held financially responsible for any fire caused by improper fireworks activities; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature designates June 21, 2015, to July 21, 2015, inclusive, as Fireworks Safety Month; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature encourages the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and local fire protection agencies to educate members of the public about the risks of improperly using fireworks, including fireworks that have been approved as safe and sane; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature encourages these agencies to advise members of the public about the high fines for use or sale of illegal fireworks in addition to the risk of paying for wildfire damage caused by improper or illegal use of fireworks; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.