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HR-123 (2021-2022)

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REVISED AUGUST 18, 2022

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2021–2022 REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE RESOLUTION

NO. 123

Introduced by Assembly Member Reyes

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Aguiar-Curry, Alvarez, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Bigelow, Bloom, Boerner Horvath, Mia Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Carrillo, Chen, Cooley, Cooper, Cunningham, Megan Dahle, Daly, Davies, Flora, Fong, Mike Fong, Friedman, Gabriel, Gallagher, Cristina Garcia, Eduardo Garcia, Gipson, Gray, Grayson, Haney, Holden, Irwin, Jones-Sawyer, Kalra, Kiley, Lackey, Levine, Low, Maienschein, Mathis, Mayes, McCarty, McKinnor, Medina, Mullin, Muratsuchi, Nazarian, Nguyen, O'Donnell, Patterson, Petrie-Norris, Quirk, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Rendon, Luz Rivas, Robert Rivas, Rodriguez, Blanca Rubio, Salas, Santiago, Seyarto, Smith, Stone, Ting, Valladares, Villapudua, Voepel, Waldron, Ward, Akilah Weber, Wicks, and Wilson)

August 02, 2022

Relative to Children's Environmental Health Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

HR 123, as introduced, Reyes.

WHEREAS, Our children are California's future and are especially vulnerable to environmental health issues because they are physiologically very different from adults and are in a dynamic state of growth. From birth through young adulthood, children experience rapid physiological growth, and their systems absorb more toxins in proportion to their body weight than do adults' systems. Children also have higher metabolic rates than do adults, and relative to body size, children eat and drink more food and liquid than their full-grown counterparts. Children also have unique behavior and activity patterns. They live and play much closer to the ground than do adults, and are therefore exposed differently to toxins; and

WHEREAS, All children are affected by environmental hazards because different kinds of pollution can be found throughout our state. Contaminants are transported through many media, including air, water, soil, and food, and are absorbed by children when they breathe, drink, eat, and touch the contaminated media. Children's exposure to these toxins can harm their health; and

WHEREAS, Children's exposure to environmental contaminants results in greater consequences over time, as health issues from negative environmental factors can develop over the course of years, leaving more time for children to develop health conditions

as compared to adults that may be exposed later in life. Furthermore, because a child is still developing, it may be more difficult for a child's body to break down and clear harmful contaminants; and

WHEREAS, Recent scientific research by the University of California, Los Angeles, documents that certain pesticides are linked to increased rates of childhood cancers and brain tumors in the children of women who lived, during pregnancy, within two and one-half miles of fields treated with any amount of those pesticides; and

WHEREAS, Many pesticides used in California are associated with major childhood health conditions. Some pesticides are known neurotoxins and have been linked to higher rates of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder and autism spectrum disorders in children. In addition, studies have demonstrated strong associations between pesticides and asthma diagnoses for children under five years of age. Many pesticides also contain endocrine-disrupting chemicals and PFAS, which mimic hormones and impact brain development; and

WHEREAS, Studies performed by the State Air Resources Board have found that children exposed to air pollution suffered decreased lung function and development and were more prone to developing asthma and bronchitis, illnesses that can stay with children their entire lives and even shorten their lifespans; and

WHEREAS, Another example of an environmental hazard that harms children is lead exposure. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that there is no safe level of lead in children. The State Department of Public Health reports that lead exposure at very low levels can cause learning, behavioral, and attention difficulties in children, and nervous system and organ damage. Exposure to high levels of lead can be fatal. While children are often exposed to lead as a result of contact with lead-based paint, the United States Environmental Protection Agency estimates that as much as 20 percent of a child's lead exposure comes from lead in drinking water. Drinking water can be an even larger source of lead exposure for infants who consume mostly water-based formula. The State Department of Public Health's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program reports that environmental lead hazards are pervasive throughout California and found that 99.2 percent of California's ZIP Codes could be defined as being "at risk" for childhood lead exposure; and

WHEREAS, It is an established fact that children from low-income communities and communities of color are at disproportionate risk for exposure to environmental hazards, and the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment within the California Environmental Protection Agency reports that Latino, Black, immigrant, and children of color in California are more likely to reside in areas with disproportionately higher exposure to environmental contaminants; and

WHEREAS, Nationally, the United States has experienced worrisome increases in certain childhood diseases, disorders, and health problems, including asthma, cancer, autism, and obesity. Researchers are documenting to what degree these increases are linked to environmental exposures; and

WHEREAS, The aim of Children's Environmental Health Month is to raise awareness about the importance of ensuring clean air and water, safe food and consumer products, and healthy environments during a child's development and beyond; and

WHEREAS, Children's Environmental Health Day was created by the Children's Environmental Health Network and celebrated nationally since October 13, 2016; and

WHEREAS, Children's Environmental Health Month is a national and statewide effort supported by individuals, nonprofit organizations, and governmental agencies, and was first recognized by the California Legislature in 2019; and

WHEREAS, Children's Environmental Health Month encourages individuals and organizations to raise awareness and understanding of children's environmental health issues, seek improved environmental health policies and protections for children, and perform acts of sustainability or environmental health wellness; and

WHEREAS, Together, we can safeguard the health, safety, and well-being of our children, who are our most precious resource; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, That the Assembly proclaims October 2022 as Children's Environmental Health Month, and affirms that all children have a right to clean air and water, safer food and products, and healthy environments; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

REVISIONS:

Heading—Line 2.
