

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

House Concurrent Resolution No. 44

97TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVES SMITH (Sponsor), GARDNER, PACE,
WALTON GRAY AND MIMS (Co-sponsors).

6316L.02I

WHEREAS, during the 1950s and 1960s, as part of a series of Cold War experiments, the United States Army dusted chosen American cities from coast to coast with a fine powder of a fluorescent, potentially toxic chemical; and

WHEREAS, the powder scattering was part of Operation Large Area Coverage (LAC), a series of tests the Army says were designed to assess the threat of biological attacks by simulating the airborne dispersion of germs; and

WHEREAS, the experiments exposed large portions of the United States, and parts of Mexico and Canada, to flurries of a synthesized chemical called zinc cadmium sulfide; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, previously classified documents revealed new details about how and where the United States Army sprayed chemical agents over thousands of unwitting residents of some 33 urban and rural areas, including St. Louis, in which populations were deliberately exposed without their knowledge; and

WHEREAS, St. Louis was one of the cities singled out for heavy-duty testing during Operation LAC. Testing was conducted throughout the Pruitt-Igoe housing project located northwest of downtown St. Louis, a low-income and predominantly minority community of 10,000 people, with approximately 70% of the community comprised of children under the age of twelve; and

WHEREAS, in St. Louis, the United States Army spread zinc cadmium sulfide with motorized blowers perched atop low-income housing buildings and schools, claiming at the time that the machines were part of a test for smoke screens that could guard against aerial observation by the Russians; and

WHEREAS, despite the extent of the experiments, local politicians were not notified about the content of the testing. When the true purpose of the machines was revealed by the Army in 1994, a public outcry led to Congress requesting that the National Research Council probe zinc cadmium sulfide's health effects; and

WHEREAS, the National Research Council's report concluded that, while the toxicity of zinc cadmium sulfide itself was not well understood, the quantities of the chemical released

35 by the United States Army would not have harmed the public even if the cadmium involved had
36 acted similarly to the purer, more toxic forms of the element; and
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38 **WHEREAS**, the National Academy of Sciences also concluded that zinc cadmium
39 sulfide exposure did not pose a threat to human health, while acknowledging that more toxicity
40 studies should be conducted; and
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42 **WHEREAS**, in 1994, the New York Times reported that zinc cadmium sulfide was
43 sprayed over an elementary school in Minneapolis, where former students later reported an
44 unusually high number of stillbirths and birth defects; and
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46 **WHEREAS**, exposure to zinc cadmium sulfide has been linked to devastating side
47 effects, such as lung cancer, prostate cancer, death, developmental defects in children, liver
48 damage, kidney damage, calcium deficiency, osteoporosis, osteomalacia, anemia, loss of sense
49 of smell, reduced sperm count, discoloration of teeth, pulmonary edema, chemical pneumonitis,
50 respiratory failure, emphysema, dyspnea, bronchitis, chronic rhinitis, and decreased birth
51 weights; and
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53 **WHEREAS**, according to the Army's documents, one of the compounds that was sprayed
54 on the public was called "FP2266", also known as "Radium 226". The now-defunct US Radium
55 Company came under fire and numerous lawsuits were filed after several of its workers were
56 exposed to dangerous levels of Radium 226 in its fluorescent paint. US Radium Company was
57 found liable for producing a radioactive powdered paint that killed many young women who
58 painted fluorescent watch tiles; and
59

60 **WHEREAS**, the Army never followed up on the long-term health of the residents
61 exposed to the testing during Operation LAC. In 1972, the government destroyed the Pruitt-Igoue
62 houses; and
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64 **WHEREAS**, Operation LAC tests also included the dispersion of biological agents,
65 which were thought not to be harmful at the time, but some of the organisms used have since
66 been shown to be potentially pathogenic in people with weakened immune systems; and
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68 **WHEREAS**, an explanation and answers from the federal government regarding what
69 occurred and the potential health effects of Operation Large Area Coverage testing which
70 occurred in the 1950s and 1960s is long overdue for the people of St. Louis and all the
71 communities impacted;
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73 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the members of the House of
74 Representatives of the Ninety-seventh General Assembly, Second Regular Session, the Senate
75 concurring therein, hereby strongly urge and request that:
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77 (1) The United States Army hold town hall sessions in the St. Louis region to explain
78 the testing which occurred as a result of Operation Large Area Coverage in the 1950s and 1960s
79 in St. Louis; and
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81 (2) The United States Environmental Protection Agency and the United States
82 Department of Health and Human Services conduct a study to track the health effects on
83 populations exposed to Operation Large Area Coverage testing; and
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85 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Chief Clerk of the Missouri House of
86 Representatives be instructed to prepare properly inscribed copies of this resolution for John
87 McHugh, Secretary of the Army; Kathleen Sebelius, United States Secretary of Health and
88 Human Services; Gina McCarthy, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency; and
89 each member of the Missouri Congressional delegation.

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