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**DATE:** October 10, 2003  
**FROM:** S. Todd Stolp MD., Tuolumne County Health Officer  
**RE:** SB 702 Draft Report

The draft report appears to be heavily weighted in the direction of arguing in favor of an environmental monitoring entity apart from other public health organizational machinery. In scrutinizing the shortcomings of past preventative efforts, such as the encouragement of diesel operated vehicles in certain venues and dietary recommendations that favored the consumption of anti-oxidants, problems arose when there was a lack of collaboration between experts from multiple health disciplines. There must be scientific, outcome based data to support environmental monitoring before the state incurs further additional cost to establish such surveillance activities.

As an example, the recent CDC publication of the Task Force study of firearm laws was unable to determine the effectiveness of such laws. Such studies are critical to undertake before interventions are instituted, in this case firearm laws, to impact upon the incidence of firearm-related violence. The public is very susceptible to suggestions of environmental risk, and very likely to seek relief through litigation, when risks of environmental exposure are made public. It is important to clarify the actual *in vivo* risk of environmental hazards before monitoring for such hazards in our communities.

This being said, it is clear that the self-focused, profit-driven interests of private and public industries render these entities incapable of an unbiased assessment of the environmental risks posed by the pursuit of their trade. Therefore, the protection of the public's interest resulting from the environmental impact of various industries falls upon the public health infrastructure in its most broad definition. I would therefore support the intentions of SB 702, while cautioning that it should evolve in the setting of a coordinated effort by all public health agencies, with a premium placed upon identifying the actual, accessible, and malleable factors in our environment which have a negative impact on health. These priorities should be more clearly represented in the SB 702 Report.

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