

Senate Bill No. 702

CHAPTER 538

An act to add Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 104324) to Part 1 of Division 103 of the Health and Safety Code, relating to environmental health.

[Approved by Governor October 4, 2001. Filed with Secretary of State October 5, 2001.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 702, Escutia. Chronic disease: environmental determinants.

Existing law makes various provisions for the prevention of disease, including chronic diseases, and the promotion of health, and imposes various requirements on the State Department of Health Services in this regard.

This bill would declare legislative intent to establish an Environmental Health Surveillance System, in accordance with the recommendations of the working group created pursuant to the bill and described below.

This bill would provide that the purpose of the EHSS shall be to establish an ongoing surveillance of environmental exposures and the diseases afflicting Californians. The bill would require the division and the office, in cooperation with the Regents of the University of California, to create a working group of technical experts with specified duties, including the development of possible approaches to establishing the EHSS, and would express legislative intent that legislation be enacted adopting one of these approaches.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) In its fight against chronic diseases, including birth defects, that are related to the environment, California must give communities and public health professionals solid, reliable information, which is the most basic tool to undertake the prevention of these diseases.

(b) Data generated by tracking and monitoring chronic diseases are critical to all of the following:

(1) Knowing where and how to put in place the most effective strategies to prevent diseases.

(2) Assessing the contribution of diseases to disabilities and premature mortality.



- (3) Measuring the effectiveness of prevention strategies.
 - (4) Generating hypotheses that may lead to new scientific knowledge about the causes of, and most effective ways to fight, chronic diseases.
- (c) To examine the relationships between chronic diseases and the environment, the state should do all of the following:
- (1) Survey a cross section of the overall population in California, including chronically ill patients, and their environmental exposures.
 - (2) Conduct biomonitoring to measure pollutant levels in blood and urine samples for a cross section of the population.
 - (3) Link data created by the survey to other health and environmental data bases, such as birth certificates, neonatal blood tests, hospital admissions, emergency room visits, and mortality.
 - (4) Require state government agencies and universities to examine whether, and the extent to which, past environmental exposures might increase the risk of several chronic diseases, including birth defects, heart disease, cancer, asthma and other respiratory conditions, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, and other neurological degenerative diseases.
- (d) The initial investment to establish this type of a data collection and analysis infrastructure to develop preventive strategies would constitute a small fraction of the annual costs of controlling chronic diseases in California.
- (e) It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this act to form a public-private partnership to create an environmental health and chronic disease surveillance system to do all of the following:
- (1) Provide a data base, with linkages to the survey, biomonitoring, and disease type, to assess the impact of environmental contaminants on the human body and, to the extent possible, regional data to assess geographic variability.
 - (2) Track and evaluate a variety of chronic diseases in relation to environmental exposures, including state and local data on actual incidences of chronic disease.
 - (3) Make data available to the public in an accessible and useful format.
 - (4) Ultimately provide information to the relevant board, department, or office within the California Environmental Protection Agency and to the relevant branch or division within the State Department of Health Services for the development of appropriate preventive strategies.
- SEC. 2. Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 104324) is added to Part 1 of Division 103 of the Health and Safety Code, to read:



CHAPTER 8. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

104324. (a) It is the intent of the Legislature to establish an Environmental Health Surveillance System (EHSS) in accordance with this chapter. The purpose of the EHSS shall be to establish ongoing surveillance of the environmental exposures and diseases affecting Californians, with a focus on prevalence and determinants of chronic diseases. The Regents of the University of California are requested to cooperate with the division and the office in establishing the EHSS.

(b) The objectives of the EHSS are as follows:

(1) To track and evaluate a variety of chronic diseases in relation to environmental exposures.

(2) To allow both government and university investigators and public health officials to assess the impact of environmental contaminants on the human body.

(3) To provide information to the relevant board, department, or office within the California Environmental Protection Agency and to the relevant branch or division within the State Department of Health Services for the development of appropriate preventive strategies.

104324.2. (a) On or before July 1, 2002, the Division of Environmental and Occupational Disease Control in the State Department of Health Services, in consultation with the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, shall create a working group of technical experts, including experts who have knowledge of the sensitivity and exposure of children, women of child-bearing age, seniors, and disparately affected populations to environmental hazards, to do all of the following:

(1) Develop possible approaches to establishing the EHSS, including an estimated cost for each approach.

(2) Prepare and submit a report to the State Department of Health Services and, the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, and appropriate legislative committees, by July 1, 2003, on the possible approaches to establishing the EHSS, including an estimated cost of each approach, and the recommended approach to establishing an EHSS for California.

(3) Develop the health and environmental measurements needed to do both of the following:

(A) Obtain an ongoing picture of the health of Californians.

(B) Establish a data base that may facilitate the examination of the relationship between chronic diseases, including birth defects, and the environment.



(b) The Regents of the University of California are requested to cooperate with the division and the office in creating the work group described in this section.

104324.3. It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would require the adoption and implementation, by specified dates, of one of the approaches recommended by the working group pursuant to Section 104324.2.

104324.5. This chapter shall only apply to the University of California to the extent that the Regents of the University of California make it applicable by appropriate resolution.

