

House Resolution No. 344

99TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE SMITH (85).

1707H.02I

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

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

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

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

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17 **WHEREAS**, St. Louis was one of the cities singled out for heavy-duty testing during
18 Operation LAC. Testing was conducted throughout the Pruitt-Igoe housing project located
19 northwest of downtown St. Louis, a low-income and predominantly minority community of
20 10,000 people, with approximately 70% of the community comprised of children under the age
21 of twelve; and

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23 **WHEREAS**, in St. Louis, the United States Army spread zinc cadmium sulfide with
24 motorized blowers perched atop low-income housing buildings and schools, claiming at the time

25 that the machines were part of a test for smoke screens that could guard against aerial
26 observation by the Russians; and

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

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33 **WHEREAS**, the National Research Council's report concluded that, while the toxicity
34 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

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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-Igoe
62 houses; and

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64 **WHEREAS**, Operation LAC tests also included the dispersion of biological agents,
65 which were not thought 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 LAC testing that occurred in the 1950s and
70 1960s is long overdue for the people of St. Louis and all the communities impacted:

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72 **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the members of the House of
73 Representatives of the Ninety-ninth General Assembly, First Regular Session, hereby strongly
74 urge and request that:

75 (1) The United States Army hold town hall sessions in the St. Louis region to explain
76 the testing that occurred as a result of Operation Large Area Coverage in the 1950s and 1960s
77 in St. Louis; and

78 (2) The United States Environmental Protection Agency and the United States
79 Department of Health and Human Services conduct a study to track the health effects on
80 populations exposed to Operation Large Area Coverage testing; and

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82 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Chief Clerk of the Missouri House of
83 Representatives be instructed to prepare properly inscribed copies of this resolution for the
84 Acting Secretary of the Army, United States Secretary of Health and Human Services,

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85 Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and each member of the Missouri
86 Congressional delegation.

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