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HOUSE BILL NO. 452
INTRODUCED BY H. HARPER

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTS OF RADIOACTIVE FALLOUT ON THE PEOPLE OF MONTANA FROM NUCLEAR TESTING CONDUCTED IN THE PAST."

WHEREAS, the people of Montana were exposed to radioactive iodine-131 fallout that occurred during the 1950s and 1960s attributable to atmospheric nuclear bomb tests carried out at the Nevada Test Site; and

WHEREAS, Montana is one of the states that was downwind and received exposure through settlement of dry particles on the ground and Meagher County had the highest estimated average dose in the country of between 12 and 16 rads; and

WHEREAS, of the next 20 counties in the country receiving exposure of between 9 and 12 rads, 14 of the counties are in Montana: Broadwater, Beaverhead, Jefferson, Powell, Judith Basin, Madison, Fergus, Gallatin, Petroleum, Lewis and Clark, Blaine, Silver Bow, Chouteau, and Deer Lodge; and

WHEREAS, exposure to iodine-131 is known to accumulate in the thyroid gland and concerns have been raised that the fallout could cause thyroid cancer in people who were exposed to it as children; and

WHEREAS, each year an estimated 16,100 Americans will be diagnosed with thyroid cancer and 1,230 will die from the disease. The incidence rate for women is more than twice as high as the rate for men.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Determination of effects of radioactive fallout from nuclear testing

-- legislative intent. (1) The department of public health and human services is required to determine the extent of exposure of the people of Montana to radioactive iodine-131 fallout that occurred during the 1950s and 1960s attributable to atmospheric nuclear bomb tests carried out at the Nevada test site. It is the intent of the legislature that the department determine the extent of the damage and research possible mitigation or any lingering effects. The department of public health and human services shall survey existing research in this area, including but not limited to:

- (a) research by the national cancer institute to estimate and assess the exposure;

- 1 (b) any available studies on risk assessment;
- 2 (c) the centers for disease control and prevention study of the health effects of the radioactive iodine
- 3 release from the Hanford, Washington, nuclear weapons plant in the 1940s and 1950s; and
- 4 (d) any other past studies that are relevant.
- 5 (2) In addition, if the information is not currently available, the department shall review any vital statistics
- 6 and indices, including birth records and death certificates, to determine the effects on Montanans who were
- 7 exposed during the 1950s and 1960s.

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9 **NEW SECTION. Section 2. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an
10 integral part of Title 50, and the provisions of Title 50 apply to [section 1].

11 - END -