

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 14  
INTRODUCED BY A. CURTISS

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA URGING THE MONTANA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO PURSUE FUNDING OPTIONS FROM FEDERAL SOURCES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT, CONSTRUCTION, AND MAINTENANCE IN LIBBY, MONTANA, OF A CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF ASBESTOS AND THE TREATMENT OF ILLNESSES RELATED TO TREMOLITE-SERIES ASBESTOS.

WHEREAS, illness from tremolite-series asbestos is a problem that extends beyond Montana to national and international levels but that afflicts Libby, Montana, in particular, a town that has the largest identified population of people suffering from diseases associated with exposure to tremolite-series asbestos; and

WHEREAS, studies reviewed by the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry identified asbestiform fibers from Libby, Montana, in concentrations higher than in samples from South Carolina and comparisons of certain samples from Virginia and South Africa also indicated reasons for concern about the asbestos-related samples from Montana; and

WHEREAS, further study of tremolite-series asbestos is important for an understanding of the health implications regarding proximity to vermiculite mines and waste products, including tremolite-series asbestos, from mining and milling vermiculite; and

WHEREAS, scientists from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry have begun studying the residents of Libby in relation to their exposure to vermiculite that was mined and milled in the area between 1923 and 1990; and

WHEREAS, when the Governor in 2002 named Libby, Montana, as the state's top priority for hazardous waste cleanup, thus making it eligible for an expedited listing on a Superfund national priorities list, this was the second time in 20 years that the community had received Superfund status, with the first time in 1983 involving a 20-plus-year study and abatement process regarding ground water contamination; and

WHEREAS, every dark cloud is said to have a silver lining and for the community of Libby the opportunity exists to participate in indepth studies related to the effects on human health of mining and milling of vermiculite and of exposure to byproducts, such as tremolite-series asbestos, as well as in studies on the possible treatments of diseases related to exposure to tremolite-series asbestos; and

WHEREAS, research is best performed in a community where people suffering from different stages

of diseases related to exposure to tremolite-series asbestos may be studied in the surroundings associated with the exposure; and

WHEREAS, the existing medical community of Libby, Montana, includes a state-of-the-art hospital and medical personnel with the experience and expertise to address the diagnoses and treatment of asbestos-related diseases; and

WHEREAS, telecommunications systems allow researchers in Libby, Montana, to confer with specialists anywhere in the world; and

WHEREAS, the community of Libby is in contact with specialists nationwide, as well as specialists at the University of Montana in Missoula, at Montana State University in Bozeman, and at state agencies in Helena; and

WHEREAS, the community of Libby, Montana, has a sociopolitical structure with the experience and expertise for addressing asbestos-related issues and a skilled and available work force for constructing a center in Libby for the study of asbestos issues and for conducting research into diseases associated with exposure to tremolite-series asbestos; and

WHEREAS, Libby, Montana, is the most logical location in the world for the construction of a center to research asbestos issues and the medical treatment of diseases related to tremolite-series asbestos; and

WHEREAS, Libby, Montana, is in the process of acquiring land to accommodate a facility for the study of asbestos issues and treatment of diseases associated with tremolite-series asbestos; and

WHEREAS, research, study, and medical care are welcomed and fully supported by the greater Libby community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislature urge the Montana Congressional Delegation to pursue funding options from federal sources to develop, build, and maintain in Libby, Montana, a center for the study of asbestos issues and the treatment of illnesses related to tremolite-series asbestos.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of State send copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, to members of the Montana Congressional Delegation, and to all other members of the U.S. Congress.

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