

Introduced by Senator Fuller

January 13, 2015

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 7—Relative to Valley Fever Awareness Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SCR 7, as introduced, Fuller. Valley Fever Awareness Month.

This measure would declare August 2015 as Valley Fever Awareness Month.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Valley Fever (coccidioidomycosis), a progressive,
2 multisymptom, respiratory disorder, is a debilitating disease; and
3 WHEREAS, Valley Fever is caused by the inhalation of tiny
4 airborne fungi that live in the soil but are released into the air by
5 soil disturbance or wind; and

6 WHEREAS, Valley Fever attacks the respiratory system, causing
7 infections that can lead to symptoms that resemble a cold,
8 influenza, or pneumonia; and

9 WHEREAS, If left untreated or mistreated, infection can spread
10 from the lungs into the bloodstream, causing inflammation to the
11 skin, permanent damage to lung and bone tissue, and swelling of
12 the membrane surrounding the brain, leading to meningitis, which
13 can be devastating and even fatal; and

14 WHEREAS, Once serious symptoms of Valley Fever appear,
15 including pneumonia and labored breathing, prompt treatment with
16 often toxic antifungal drugs must be given, which is especially
17 disagreeable for patients who require the drugs to be injected

1 beneath the base of their skulls for meningitis and which can cause
2 side effects such as nausea, fever, and kidney damage; and

3 WHEREAS, Within California alone, Valley Fever is found in
4 portions of the Sacramento Valley, all of the San Joaquin Valley,
5 desert regions, and portions of southern California; and

6 WHEREAS, California does not have an official statewide
7 method of tracking the rate of Valley Fever infections; and

8 WHEREAS, In the last 10 years, infection rates in California
9 and Arizona have risen 400 percent, from an estimated 31 cases
10 for every 100,000 people in 1999 to 157 cases for every 100,000
11 people in 2011; and

12 WHEREAS, In Kern County, the rate of infection of Valley
13 Fever more than tripled from 2009, for a total of 2,051 cases in
14 2010 and 2,734 cases in 2011; and

15 WHEREAS, San Joaquin County Public Health Services
16 recorded 27 cases of Valley Fever in 2009, 46 cases in 2010, and
17 123 cases in 2011; and

18 WHEREAS, Valley Fever infection rates rose twelvefold
19 nationwide from 1995 to 2009, according to the federal Centers
20 for Disease Control and Prevention, and researchers estimate that
21 the fungus infects more than 150,000 people each year who either
22 suffer serious ailments without knowing the cause of their illness
23 or escape detection of the disease; and

24 WHEREAS, Misdiagnosis of Valley Fever is so pervasive that
25 experts say that some people suffer and even die from Valley Fever
26 without knowing they ever had the disease; and

27 WHEREAS, The Governor declared a Drought State of
28 Emergency on January 17, 2014, and California is experiencing
29 record dry conditions; and

30 WHEREAS, Dry conditions and lack of precipitation present
31 urgent problems regarding Valley Fever; and

32 WHEREAS, Valley Fever is usually found in soil two to eight
33 inches from the surface and the extreme dry conditions caused by
34 drought increase the chances of coccidioidomycosis airborne fungi
35 exposure; and

36 WHEREAS, Central Valley prison inmates are being infected
37 by Valley Fever at epidemic rates, contributing significantly to the
38 state's prison health care costs; and

39 WHEREAS, The rapid spread of Valley Fever at state prisons
40 in the Central Valley has resulted in multiple prison inmate deaths

1 and prompted calls to close certain affected prisons, further
2 exacerbating efforts to comply with federal orders to reduce prison
3 overcrowding; and

4 WHEREAS, Valley Fever kills between 100 to 200 more
5 Americans every year than tuberculosis; and

6 WHEREAS, Valley Fever most seriously affects the young, the
7 elderly, those with lowered immune systems, and those of African
8 American and Filipino descent; and

9 WHEREAS, Valley Fever is a disease that has been studied for
10 the past 100 years but still remains impossible to control and
11 difficult to treat; and

12 WHEREAS, There is no known cure for Valley Fever, but
13 researchers are closer than ever to finding a much-needed vaccine
14 against this devastating disease; and

15 WHEREAS, The research effort to find a vaccine for Valley
16 Fever and a funding partnership including the State of California
17 were approved by the Legislature and signed by Governor Wilson
18 in 1997; now, therefore, be it

19 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
20 *thereof concurring,* That the Legislature does hereby proclaim
21 August 2015 as Valley Fever Awareness Month; and be it further

22 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
23 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.