Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 161

Introduced by Senator De León
(Principal coauthors: Assembly Members Gomez and Santiago)
(Coauthor: Senator Lara)

August 2, 2016

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 161—Relative to bioscience.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 161, as introduced, De León. Los Angeles Basin: bioscience hub.

This measure would promote the Los Angeles Basin as a bioscience hub to provide new economic opportunity for the State of California, and would declare the intent of the Legislature to develop and encourage state and local policy proposals that focus on the Los Angeles Basin bioscience industry.

Fiscal committee: no.

WHEREAS, The 21st Century is often referred to as the "Bio Century" because biosciences are at the forefront of both creativity and innovation, representing a convergence point for engineering, information technology, nanosciences, communication, and media; and

WHEREAS, In 2012, President Barack Obama released the National Bioeconomy Blueprint, noting that the biological sciences, the "bioeconomy," is "a large and rapidly growing segment of the world economy that provides substantial public benefit"; and

WHEREAS, California has been and will continue to be at the forefront of developing an innovative economy. First, Silicon Valley ushered in the computer age. Now, the Los Angeles Basin is poised to become the epicenter of biotechnology with its

academic institutions, training centers, companies, and communities. The Los Angeles bioscience industry has been a consistent growth industry even during the recession and recovery years. In bioscience industries, employment in Los Angeles County rose from 37,759 jobs in 2001 to 42,211 in 2010, an 11.8 percent increase; and

WHEREAS, The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the second largest school district in the nation with over 1,100 schools and an enrollment of over 415,000 low-income students, offers 81 science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs to its elementary, middle, and high school students. The number of kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, students in LAUSD and other school districts in the Los Angeles Basin who have access to STEM programs must be expanded as these students are California's future workforce; and

WHEREAS, Students who attend schools in Los Angeles's lowest socio-economic neighborhoods are being overlooked for their potential to enter and succeed in highly technical fields, including bioscience. California's kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, public school system and the state's public and private universities must collaborate to establish a pipeline that provides concrete opportunities for low-income, underrepresented students to pursue higher education in scientific fields of study; and

WHEREAS, The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) reveals the state will be 1.1 million bachelor degrees short by 2030. Furthermore, PPIC states California's best approach to closing its skills gap will be to improve the educational attainment of its residents. Currently, California ranks near the bottom of all states, 47th, in the share of recent high school graduates who enroll in four-year colleges or universities; and

WHEREAS, For the majority of low-income, underrepresented students, their access to a higher education remains their passport to economic security. If these students earn a STEM degree and are able to work in the bioscience industry, they can break the cycle of income inequality. According to PPIC, workers with engineering degrees earn a median annual wage of $96,000, which is almost three times more than an individual who earns only a high school diploma; and

WHEREAS, In partnership with the leading higher education institutions in the area, state and local governments need to promote and develop a competitive bioscience industry in Los Angeles. First, the Los Angeles Basin is home to several leading academic medical centers that attract nearly $1 billion in National Institutes of Health Funding. Second, in 2010, the Los Angeles biotech workforce was comprised of 42,000 employees with average wages of $72,052. Third, the area's major research universities, such as the University of California at Los Angeles, the University of Southern California, and the California Institute of Technology, created 1,118 invention disclosures and 43 startups in 2010; and

WHEREAS, Local governments must work in partnership to promote and develop the Los Angeles Basin to address the fact that college graduates are leaving this area to pursue biotechnology job opportunities elsewhere. Annually, universities in the Los Angeles Basin produce over 5,000 college graduates in science, technology, and engineering. Yet, the Los Angeles Basin ranks 14th nationwide in biotech investment because many of these graduates leave to pursue jobs in other cities, such as San Francisco and San Diego, and in other states where biotech infrastructure has already been developed; and

WHEREAS, Within the Los Angeles Basin, the University of Southern California and local governments are working to establish a new biotech park that will create up to 3,000 new construction jobs and nearly 4,000 permanent jobs that will be accessible to local communities. This, and other potential plans at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, Olive View-UCLA Medical Center, and Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center, will create new potential economic, educational, and training opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Local governments are also in the initial stages of developing plans to address the creation and expansion of the biotech industry. In March 2015, the City of Los Angeles introduced a motion to analyze the estimated fiscal and economic impact of local biotech tax credits to encourage growth and development. In 2012, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors commissioned a feasibility study for advancing the bioscience industry in the region that focused on commercializing new technologies, keeping and attracting new bioscience talent, collaborating with university technology transfer offices, and

marketing the region to new start-up companies and established national and international bioscience companies; and

WHEREAS, In order for the Los Angeles Basin to emerge as a bioscience hub, state and local governments must move beyond the planning stages. It is critical they take concrete action to promote and invest in this industry to improve the economic opportunity for the Los Angeles Basin residents and businesses; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That promoting the Los Angeles Basin as a bioscience hub will provide a new economic engine for the State of California, in particular for underserved areas; and be it further

Resolved, It is the intent of the Legislature to develop and encourage, through the enactment of legislation, state and local public policy proposals that focus on this large, fast-growing, and diverse industry to establish manufacturing and research activities for the purpose of providing high-quality jobs while advancing public health; and be it further

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

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