

# House Resolution No. 565

## 98TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE SMITH.

2363L.011

D. ADAM CRUMBLISS, Chief Clerk

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 thought not 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 Large Area Coverage testing which  
70 occurred in the 1950s and 1960s is long overdue for the people of St. Louis and all the  
71 communities impacted:

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

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

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

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84           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Chief Clerk of the Missouri House of  
85 Representatives be instructed to prepare properly inscribed copies of this resolution for John  
86 McHugh, Secretary of the Army; Sylvia Mathews Burwell, United States Secretary of Health and  
87 Human Services; Gina McCarthy, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency; and  
88 each member of the Missouri Congressional delegation.

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