

Measure S407

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please carefully read the following description of a ballot measure that was written by a disinterested expert. Feel free to take notes or outline passages as you read.

This should take you approximately 5 minutes.

BALLOT MEASURE S407

BACKGROUND

Currently, the state has a number of programs designed to protect people against possible exposures to harmful chemicals. The major programs involve the regulation of:

- **Waste Discharges.** The State Water Resources Control Board and the regional water quality control boards regulate the discharge of wastes into state waters, including rivers, streams, and groundwater that may be used as sources of drinking water. The Department of Health Services regulates the disposal and cleanup of hazardous waste, including hazardous waste that may contaminate drinking water.
- **Drinking Water.** Current law prohibits local water agencies from supplying drinking water to the public that contains dangerous levels of certain harmful chemicals. Local water agencies must inform customers when the level of these chemicals exceeds certain limits. The Department of Health Services enforces these limits.
- **Workplace Hazards.** The Department of Industrial Relations regulates exposure to cancer-causing materials and other harmful substances in the workplace. Current law also requires employers to inform workers of possible exposure to dangerous substances.
- **Pesticides.** The Department of Food and Agriculture regulates the use of pesticides in agriculture and in other business applications, such as maintenance of landscaping and golf courses.

These regulatory agencies must make judgments about the amounts of harmful chemicals that can be released into the environment. In doing so, they try to balance what it costs to prevent the release of chemicals against the risks the chemicals pose to public health and safety. As the level of allowable exposure goes down, the cost of prevention typically goes up. The risk that some substances pose to health is not always known. Often, scientists cannot determine precisely the health impact of low-level exposures that occur over 20 or 30 years.

PROPOSAL

This measure proposes two additional requirements for businesses employing 10 or more people. First, it generally would prohibit those businesses from knowingly releasing into any source of drinking water any chemical in an amount that is known to cause cancer or in an amount that exceeds 1/ 1,000th of the amount necessary for an observable effect on "reproductive toxicity."

The term "reproductive toxicity" is not defined. Second, the measure generally would require those businesses to warn people before knowingly and intentionally exposing them to chemicals that cause cancer or reproductive toxicity. The measure would require the state to issue lists of substances that cause cancer or reproductive toxicity.

Because these new requirements would result in more stringent standards, the practical effect of the requirements would be to impose new conditions for the issuance of permits for discharges into sources of drinking water. In order to implement the new requirements, state agencies that are responsible for issuing permits would be required to alter state regulations and develop new standards for the amount of chemicals that may be discharged into sources of drinking water.

The measure also would impose civil penalties and increase existing fines for toxic discharges. In addition, the measure would allow state or local governments, or any person acting in the public interest, to sue a business that violates these rules.



STOP!

Please go to the online survey, enter the 4-character code for this ballot measure (printed at the top and bottom of this page) and answer the survey questions.