

110TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2813

To address the risks of exposure of children to mercury from mercury-contaminated industrial sites.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 21, 2007

Mr. LOBIONDO (for himself and Mr. ANDREWS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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## A BILL

To address the risks of exposure of children to mercury from mercury-contaminated industrial sites.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Children’s Mercury  
5 Exposure Act of 2007”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds as follows:

8 (1) Mercury is a highly volatile, naturally occur-  
9 ring element that does not break down in the envi-  
10 ronment.

1           (2) Mercury is a potent neurotoxin that can af-  
2           fect the nervous system, lungs, brain, and kidneys.

3           (3) Potential sources of human exposure to  
4           mercury include breathing mercury vapor from spills  
5           or a contaminated workplace, absorbing mercury  
6           through direct contact or dental work, or eating fish  
7           or shellfish contaminated with methylmercury.

8           (4) Children can be exposed to mercury by  
9           many of the same pathways as adults.

10          (5) Children are not small adults. A child's ex-  
11          posure may differ from an adult's exposure in many  
12          ways. Children drink more fluids, eat more food,  
13          breathe more air per kilogram of body weight, and  
14          have a larger skin surface in proportion to their  
15          body volume.

16          (6) A child's behaviors and lifestyle also influ-  
17          ence exposure. Unlike adults, children crawl on the  
18          floor; they put things in their mouths; they may in-  
19          gest inappropriate things such as dirt or paint chips;  
20          they spend more time outdoors. Children also are  
21          closer to the ground, and they do not have the judg-  
22          ment of adults in avoiding hazards.

23          (7) Forms of mercury are used in manufac-  
24          turing processes, such as the production of chlorine  
25          gas, and may also be an added ingredient in prod-

1       ucts such as thermometers, fluorescent lights, cos-  
2       metics, and dental fillings.

3           (8) Due to these uses, mercury is present at a  
4       number of contaminated industrial sites in the  
5       United States.

6           (9) Children’s unique behaviors, such as soil in-  
7       gestion from normal hand-to-mouth contact, puts  
8       them at particular risk of exposure from these mer-  
9       cury-contaminated industrial sites.

10          (10) The Agency for Toxic Substances and Dis-  
11       ease Registry has determined that the risk of chil-  
12       dren’s exposure to mercury from mercury-contami-  
13       nated industrial sites has emerged as an important  
14       public health issue.

15 **SEC. 3. EXPOSURE OF CHILDREN TO MERCURY FROM MER-**  
16 **CURY-CONTAMINATED INDUSTRIAL SITES.**

17       (a) RESEARCH.—The Secretary of Health and  
18       Human Services (in this Act referred to as the “Sec-  
19       retary”), acting through the Director of the National In-  
20       stitutes of Health and in consultation with the Adminis-  
21       trator of the Environmental Protection Agency, shall es-  
22       tablish a program for the conduct or support of research  
23       regarding the risks posed by all levels of exposure of chil-  
24       dren to mercury from mercury-contaminated industrial  
25       sites.

1 (b) STUDY.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after  
3 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary,  
4 acting through the Director of the Centers for Dis-  
5 ease Control and Prevention, shall conduct a study  
6 and submit a report to the Congress on the preva-  
7 lence of the exposure of children to mercury from  
8 mercury-contaminated industrial sites.

9 (2) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary shall con-  
10 duct the study under this subsection in consultation  
11 with the Governor, and with appropriate State agen-  
12 cies, of each State.

13 (c) GRANTS.—

14 (1) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary, acting  
15 through the Director of the Centers for Disease  
16 Control and Prevention, may make grants on a com-  
17 petitive basis to State departments of health to con-  
18 duct initial and long-term testing of children exposed  
19 to mercury from mercury-contaminated industrial  
20 sites.

21 (2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For  
22 the purpose of carrying out this subsection, there  
23 are authorized to be appropriated \$10,000,000 for  
24 fiscal year 2008 and such sums as may be necessary  
25 for each of the fiscal years 2009 through 2013

1 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

2 (1) The term “Governor” means the chief execu-  
3 tive officer of a State.

4 (2) The term “State” includes the several  
5 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth  
6 of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern  
7 Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Guam, the Vir-  
8 gin Islands, and any other territory or possession of  
9 the United States.

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