

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

This bill memorializes the Congressional Delegation from Minnesota to support final passage of the *Agent Orange Equity Act of 2009*.

The resolution cites scientific studies by the United States Center for Disease Control and other governmental authorities documenting the exposure of veterans who served in the Navy and Air Force during the Vietnam War to dioxin (*agent orange*), a carcinogenic defoliant, through both airborne drifting and waterborne concentrations (as used aboard ships for drinking, cooking and washing).

Previous federal policy has restricted recognition of agent orange exposure to Vietnam veterans who had "*boots on the ground*."

The pending federal legislation – i.e., the *Agent Orange Equity Act of 2009* – would recognize exposure for U.S. sailors and airmen who were exposed in flight over Vietnam and aboard ship off the coast of Vietnam, as well.

United States Code, title 38, presumptively recognizes as *service-connected* certain diseases among military personnel who served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975; including Type II diabetes, Hodgkin's disease, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, chronic lymphocytic leukemia, multiple myeloma, prostate cancer, respiratory cancers, and soft-tissue sarcomas.

Such presumption of service-connection for these diseases enables Vietnam veterans suffering from them to obtain medical treatment for those diseases from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USVA).