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Resolution 172 issued on Agent Orange Act



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by Therese Hart | Variety News Staff

OVERWHELMING support by lawmakers for Resolution 172(EC) was expressed yesterday during session. The resolution supports U.S. Congressman Bob Filner's "Agent Orange Equity Act" and requests that the congressman include Guam and other areas on the list of those in the armed forces who were exposed to the toxic chemical while not explicitly on land. Guam and other areas were used as storage sites and transshipped during the Vietnam War, according to the resolution.

Senator Benjamin J. F. Cruz, author of the resolution further expanded the document, proposing to include an amendment to cover adverse health conditions caused by exposure to Agent Orange to not only blue water, but to areas where the chemical was stored in which civilian and military personnel were exposed.

Cruz cited a Variety story reporting that in the mid-60s to the late 70s, two military men sprayed Agent Orange along the perimeters of Andersen Air Force Base. These men are now suffering from illnesses caused by the toxic chemical.

Cruz pointed out that Congresswoman Madeleine Z. Bordallo has not signed on as a co-sponsor to the congressional legislation. Thus the Legislature will include another "whereas" requesting that she support the legislation.

Cruz said that many Guam vets are suffering from diseases associated with Agent Orange.

Although the Department of Defense never officially admitted to storing and using Agent Orange and other herbicides on Guam, a Dow Chemical Corporation report has disclosed a huge amount of dioxin contamination at Andersen Air Force Base.

Senator Eddie Calvo also spoke strongly about Guam's role in past military endeavors.

"I think almost anyone who has lived in Guam for some period of time realizes that Guam has been in the middle of this action and it has been a hot spot since World War II. My father, growing up, remembers that after World War II, they would just bury all the munitions and all the trucks and tanks would just basically dig a hole, and they would be buried along with the oil, fuel, and munitions. There has been a lot of contamination both to our land and our people. This is another message and a reminder to the people of the United States that Guam has been deeply scarred," Calvo said.

Calvo also spoke about U.S. experiments and its effects on Guam and the other islands.

"Not only for those folks that served in the military and worked at Andersen Air Force Base, particularly with Agent Orange. With these folks being exposed, this area where Agent Orange was stored was in areas right over our northern aquifer lens. But you can go back to World War II, you can go back to the issues on the DDT that was sprayed in military bases all around the community in the '60s and the '50s. You can talk about the Downwinders from the explosions that were occurring from atomic and hydrogen nuclear explosions in the Bikini Atoll," Calvo said.

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