

PRELIMINARY STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**CARRIER:**

Senate Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

REVENUE: No revenue impact**FISCAL: No fiscal impact****SUBSEQUENT REFERRAL TO: None****Action:****Vote:****Yeas:****Nays:****Exc.:****Prepared By:** Cheyenne Ross, Administrator**Meeting Dates:** 5/12, 5/19

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Urges Congress to recognize presumption of service connection for Agent Orange exposure of Vietnam War veterans serving at sea around or in the airspace above Vietnam.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Provisions of measure

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: Agent Orange was a defoliant used liberally during the Vietnam War to deprive the enemy of ground cover and support in rural areas. It was primarily sprayed via air craft, and traveled widely, reaching Navy ships in Vietnam's territorial waters. A report of The National Research Centre for Environmental Toxicology, Queensland Health Scientific Services, published in 2002, found that the process of distillation used by warships positioned off the shores of Vietnam to obtain potable water from seawater, concentrated the water's toxicity. The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have studied specific cancers among Vietnam War veterans, and found a higher risk among veterans of the Navy. The Agent Orange Act of 1991 amended Title 38 of the United States Code to recognize that certain diseases among military personnel who served in the Republic of South Vietnam between 1962 and 1975 are service-connected. Establishing a service connection permits the veteran to access appropriate compensation and health care.

House Joint Memorial 9 requests that Congress recognize a presumption of service connection for exposure to Agent Orange for veterans who served in the waters and airspace defined by the combat zone in Vietnam.

*House Committee: 7 – 0 – 0**House Floor: 57 – 0 – 3*