

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 972

To provide compensation to individuals who, during the Vietnam conflict, were employees of the Federal Government or contractor employees of the Department of Defense and suffered disability or death from exposure to Agent Orange.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 8, 2007

Mr. WEXLER (for himself, Mr. FILNER, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. MCNERNEY, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, and Mr. GONZALEZ) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To provide compensation to individuals who, during the Vietnam conflict, were employees of the Federal Government or contractor employees of the Department of Defense and suffered disability or death from exposure to Agent Orange.

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 “Civilian Agent Orange
5 Act of 2007”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) **EXPOSED EMPLOYEE.**—The term “exposed
4 employee” means an individual who—

5 (A) during the Vietnam conflict—

6 (i) was a civilian employee of the Fed-
7 eral Government, or an employee of a con-
8 tractor (or subcontractor at any tier) of
9 the Department of Defense; and

10 (ii) while so employed, was—

11 (I) physically present in the Re-
12 public of Vietnam during the period
13 beginning January 9, 1962, and end-
14 ing on May 7, 1975; or

15 (II) in or near the Korean demili-
16 tarized zone during the period begin-
17 ning September 1, 1967, and ending
18 on August 31, 1971;

19 (B) contracted an Agent Orange illness;

20 and

21 (C) suffered injury or death by reason of
22 that illness.

23 (2) **AGENT ORANGE ILLNESS.**—The term
24 “Agent Orange illness” means an illness listed by
25 the National Institute of Medicine as having at least
26 a limited or suggestive association with 2,4-

1 dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D), 1,4,5-
2 trichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4,5-T), 4-amino-3,5,6-
3 trichloropicolinic acid (picloram), and cacodylic acid
4 (dimethylarsenic acid, DMA), and 2,3,7,8-
5 tetrachlorodibenzo-*p*-dioxin (TCDD, or dioxin).

6 **SEC. 3. COMPENSATION PROGRAM.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is hereby established a pro-
8 gram to be known as the “Agent Orange Illness Com-
9 pensation Program” (in this Act referred to as the “com-
10 pensation program”), to be carried out by the Attorney
11 General.

12 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the compensation
13 program is to provide for timely, uniform, and adequate
14 compensation of exposed employees and, where applicable,
15 survivors of such employees, suffering from Agent Orange
16 illnesses incurred by such employees.

17 **SEC. 4. COMPENSATION FUND.**

18 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is hereby established
19 on the books of the Treasury a fund to be known as the
20 “Agent Orange Illness Compensation Fund” (in this Act
21 referred to as the “compensation fund”).

22 (b) AMOUNTS.—The compensation fund shall consist
23 of the following amounts:

24 (1) Amounts appropriated to the compensation
25 fund pursuant to an authorization of appropriations.

1 (2) Amounts transferred to the compensation
2 fund.

3 (c) FINANCING.—Upon the exhaustion of amounts in
4 the compensation fund, the Secretary of the Treasury
5 shall transfer directly to the compensation fund from the
6 General Fund of the Treasury, without further appropria-
7 tion, such amounts as are further necessary to carry out
8 the compensation program.

9 (d) USE.—Subject to subsection (e) of this section,
10 amounts in the compensation fund shall be used to carry
11 out the compensation program.

12 (e) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS NOT PAID FROM
13 FUND.—No cost incurred in carrying out the compensa-
14 tion program, or in administering the compensation fund,
15 shall be paid from the compensation fund.

16 (f) MONETARY ALLOWANCE NOT TO BE CONSID-
17 ERED AS INCOME OR RESOURCES FOR CERTAIN PUR-
18 POSES.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a
19 monetary allowance paid an individual under this Act shall
20 not be considered as income or resources in determining
21 eligibility for, or the amount of benefits under any Federal
22 or federally assisted program.

23 (g) INVESTMENT.—Amounts in the compensation
24 fund shall be invested in accordance with section 9702 of
25 title 31, and any interest on, and proceeds from, any such

1 investment shall be credited to and become a part of the
2 compensation fund.

3 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
4 hereby authorized to be appropriated \$100,000,000 to the
5 compensation fund.

6 **SEC. 5. COMPENSATION TO BE PROVIDED.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—An exposed employee, or the eligi-
8 ble survivor of that employee if the employee is deceased,
9 shall receive compensation for the injury, illness, or death
10 of that employee from that employee's Agent Orange ill-
11 ness in an amount determined under subsection (b).

12 (b) AMOUNT.—For each exposed employee, the Attor-
13 ney General shall provide compensation in the amount of
14 \$100,000.

15 (c) PAYMENTS IN THE CASE OF DECEASED PER-
16 SONS.—

17 (1) SURVIVORS ELIGIBLE.—In the case of an
18 exposed employee who is deceased at the time of
19 payment of compensation under this section, wheth-
20 er or not the death is the result of the employee's
21 Agent Orange illness, such payment may be made
22 only as follows:

23 (A) If the employee is survived by a spouse
24 who is living at the time of payment, such pay-
25 ment shall be made to such surviving spouse.

1 (B) If there is no surviving spouse de-
2 scribed in subparagraph (A), such payment
3 shall be made in equal shares to all children of
4 the employee who—

5 (i) had not yet attained the age of 18
6 when the employee died or was perma-
7 nently or totally disabled before the age of
8 18; and

9 (ii) are living at the time of payment.

10 (2) CLAIMS.—If an employee eligible for pay-
11 ment dies before filing a claim under this Act, a sur-
12 vivor of that employee who may receive payment
13 under paragraph (1) may file a claim for such pay-
14 ment.

15 (3) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this sub-
16 section—

17 (A) the “spouse” of an individual is a wife
18 or husband of that individual who was married
19 to that individual for at least one year imme-
20 diately before the death of that individual; and

21 (B) a “child” includes a recognized natural
22 child, a stepchild who lived with an individual
23 in a regular parent-child relationship, and an
24 adopted child.

1 (d) CHILDREN WITH SPINA BIFIDA.—In any case in
2 which a child of an exposed employee is born with spina
3 bifida by reason of that employee’s exposure to Agent Or-
4 ange, that child shall directly receive compensation in an
5 amount determined under subsection (b).

6 **SEC. 6. CLAIMS PROCESSING.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsections (b), (c),
8 and (d), the Attorney General shall specify standards and
9 criteria for filing applications and for processing, deter-
10 mining, and paying claims.

11 (b) DEADLINE.—A claim not filed within 20 years
12 after the date of the enactment of this Act is void.

13 (c) WRITTEN MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION.—Payment
14 may not be made on a claim except on written medical
15 evidence that the Attorney General, in consultation with
16 the Surgeon General, determines to be adequate.

17 (d) REVIEW.—Unless otherwise specified by the At-
18 torney General, any determination on a claim under this
19 Act is not subject to administrative or judicial review.

20 **SEC. 7. IMPLEMENTATION.**

21 The Attorney General shall prescribe regulations to
22 implement this Act.

23 **SEC. 8. OFFSET FOR CERTAIN OTHER PAYMENTS.**

24 A payment of compensation to an individual, or to
25 a survivor of that individual, under this Act shall be offset

1 by the amount of any payment made pursuant to a final
2 award or settlement on a claim, against any person, that
3 is based on the same illness, injury, or death of that indi-
4 vidual on account of exposure to Agent Orange herbicides.

○