



Mitty Advocacy Project

Archbishop Mitty High School, Diocese of San José

5000 Mitty Way, San Jose, CA 95129 | Phone: 408 - 252 - 6610

MAP Supports

S. 3394 - Comprehensive National Mercury Monitoring Act

- Senator Susan M. Collins [R-ME]
- Introduced Aug 28, 2018
- Referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.
- Summary
 - Creates a nationwide mercury monitoring program along with establishing a centralized database for the public in watersheds, soil, organisms, and affected ecological areas.
 - Will track long-term trends in mercury concentrations and deposition in water as well as soil and sediments; and mercury levels in watersheds, surface water, and fish and wildlife in terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, and marine ecosystems in response to changing mercury emissions over time.
 - A report will be submitted to Congress every two years, including relevant data on mercury contamination in the environment as well as an assessment of mercury deposition rates that need to be achieved in order to prevent adverse human and ecological effects.

MAP's Perspective

- **MAP supports this bill.**
 - This comprehensive bill mandates that multiple federal programs monitor mercury contents in various ecosystems. This will allow for the federal government to focus environmental efforts in key areas, so excess contact with or contamination in humans can be prevented.
 - This bill will also inform us on the extent of the problem and what a potential solution might look like, which is important being that mercury is a neurotoxin that has the ability to cause severe damage to the human nervous system. Since mercury is so harmful to humans, we find such action necessary for the health and safety of the general population.
 - Exposure to mercury is possible through many different mediums, and this bill will





notify the public about mercury levels in a comprehensive list of areas, which allows for us to be able to be aware of the mercury levels in everything we interact with. This way, we can all be able to make informed decisions about how to limit our mercury exposure.

A Youth Perspective on this Issue

- Living by the coast, we have observed the instrumental part fishing has played in our local economy. Our friends and family consume a large amount of fish, making it frightening to learn the impact of pollution on fish populations and our health as consumers. Mercury has been repeatedly found in contaminated fish, and as a result, often ends up in the digestive systems of people who eat them.
- Mercury is toxic to humans and leads to damaging effects such as both kidney and brain damage that inhibit our bodily growth and development.
- We know that the majority of pollution that is affecting our oceans today is caused either directly or indirectly by humans. Thus, we need to hold ourselves accountable and accept that it is our responsibility to clean up the damage we cause—the problem won't fix itself.

A Catholic Perspective on Oil Spills and Ocean Pollution

- The Catholic perspective follows the belief that care for the environment is a prevalent issue due to our view that we should be stewards of the environment. We should care for the land that will be used by future generations, especially being that we only have one earth.
- Care for God's creation is one of the USCCB's Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching. Creation is a gift from God and provides us with the basics for our lives, yet it can so easily and so often be taken for granted. Care for creation ensures that we don't neglect, but protect and respect the gift that is our natural environment.
- *Laudato Si*, an encyclical published by Pope Francis, describes how all beings on this earth must care for each other and the resources we partake of; the Pope warns us that if we continue recklessly wasting and misusing resources, we soon will have nothing left to survive. He urges us to be more aware of the waste we generate and take concrete actions to reduce the amount of waste we are emitting in the future.

