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Assembly Bill 357

Animal test methods: Alternatives.

As amended 3/7/23

Summary

AB 357 would update California's outdated animal testing laws to reflect current criteria and practices for validating alternative test methods (non-animal test methods) and require their use for certain products.

The bill will help ensure alternatives to animal testing are utilized once they become available and determined to provide information of equivalent or better scientific quality

Background

Every year in the United States, hundreds of thousands of animals suffer and die in product testing for cosmetics, drugs, household cleaners, pesticides, and industrial chemicals.

In 2000, California became the first state to pass a law requiring the use of alternative test methods. The testing methods the law applies to are lengthy and outdated, resulting in the law falling short of its intended result to speed the use of non-animal test methods for product testing. This bill would update that law.

Non-animal test methods can save time and money while providing more efficient and more effective product safety assessment. Human cell-based tests and advanced computer models, for example, deliver

human-relevant results in hours or days rather than some animal tests that can take months or years.

Animal tests do not ensure human safety and have serious scientific limitations. Different species respond inconsistently when exposed to the same chemical, resulting in less predictive test results than alternative methods based on human biology. In fact, approximately 90% of drugs ultimately fail in human trials. Half of those failed drugs are due to an unexpected toxicity in humans after an animal test where no toxicity was observed.

California is a scientific and technological leader in non-animal alternatives. Science is rapidly moving away from outdated animal tests as many faster, less expensive, and more human-relevant alternative methods become available. This legislation would ensure that companies in California are taking advantage of these new testing strategies as soon as they are available and appropriate for use.

This Bill

AB 357 would update the definition of an alternative test method to mean a test method that fulfills the following criteria:

- (1) Provides information of equal or better scientific quality compared to traditional animal test methods.

- (2) Has been identified by a validation body and accepted for use by a federal agency.
- (3) Does not use animals, or in cases when there is no other method available, uses the fewest number of animals and reduces pain and suffering of animal.

Starting January 1, 2025, a manufacturer or contract testing facility using traditional animal test methods shall report to the Attorney General information regarding their use of animal testing.

Support

Humane Society of the United States
(Sponsor)

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