

## OEHHA Begins Process Of Regulating Lead In Candies

### SPECIAL

By ROGER PEARSON, March 20, 2008

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment held two workshops to receive information relevant to the development of standards for lead in candy wrappers and for the naturally-occurring lead level in candies flavored with tamarind or chili. The impetus for this undertaking is a 2005 law authored by then-Assemblyman Juan Vargas (D-Chula Vista). In proposing the law, Vargas was responding to a series of news stories indicating that Mexican-style candies containing chili powder and Tamarind often contain high levels of lead. The Vargas-authored legislation, AB 121, (codified in Health and Safety Code section 110552), requires OEHHA to take the lead in developing standards for naturally occurring lead in candy from these two flavorings, as well as standards for lead in candy wrappers; also suspected of contributing to the problem.

The information OEHHA is seeking to assist it in establishing the two standards includes the following:

- Types of candy containing chili or tamarind that are available and consumed in California;
- Ingredients in candies flavored with chili or tamarind consumed in California containing lead in excess of 10 parts per billion;
- Processes that introduce lead into these ingredients;
- Levels of naturally occurring lead in soil in agricultural areas where chili peppers used to make candies are grown;
- Methods that minimize the amount of soil/dirt/dust that comes in contact with or remains on chili peppers used to flavor candy; and
- Types of candy wrappers that contain lead.

For each of these information categories OEHHA provides a more detailed description of the information sought in its workshop notice. For further information visit OEHHA's website at: [www.oehha.ca.gov](http://www.oehha.ca.gov).