

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2005 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 350 (Delegate Smigiel, *et al.*)
Health and Government Operations

Task Force on Indoor Air Quality in Educational Institutions

This bill establishes the Task Force on Indoor Air Quality in Educational Institutions. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and University System of Maryland (USM) must provide staff support. A final report of its findings and recommendations must be submitted to the General Assembly by July 1, 2006.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2005 and sunsets July 31, 2006.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for MDE, DHMH, MSDE, and USM are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: The bill would not materially affect local operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The task force must: (1) study the nature, location, and extent of health and environmental risks posed to students and employees of educational institutions as a result of molds, spores, and other toxic organisms in the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems; and (2) make recommendations regarding the prevention of HVAC-related illnesses, the use of appropriate remedies and controls, a plan to

provide information and warnings regarding risks, and legislative or regulatory measures needed to address gaps in federal, State, and local protection.

Current Law/Background: Governmental responsibility regarding indoor air quality has been historically allocated partly to MDE, DHMH, and the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation. Local health departments are also often involved. In Maryland monitoring indoor air quality in schools is the responsibility of the local school system's central office.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has taken an active role in improving indoor air quality in public schools by documenting the effects of poor indoor air quality and developing resources to assist local school systems. MSDE has been involved with indoor air quality concerns in public schools since 1987.

Studies show that one-half of the nation's 115,000 schools have problems linked to indoor air quality. Students are at greater risk because of the hours spent in school facilities and because children are especially susceptible to pollutants.

Chapter 591 of 2001 established the Task Force on Indoor Air Quality to study the nature, location, and extent of health and environmental risks posed to workers as a result of molds, spores, and other toxic organisms located in the HVAC systems of office buildings. The bill was modeled after the legislation that created that task force.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of the Environment, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Maryland State Department of Education, University System of Maryland, Department of Legislative Services

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mam/ljm

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