



190 West Ostend St., #201
Baltimore, MD 21230
Phone: 410.547.1515
Fax: 410.837.5436

Patrick Moran - President

Testimony
HB 1540 – Environment –
Mold – Standards, Reporting, and Penalties
Favorable with Amendments

AFSCME Council 3 supports HB 1540 with an amendment to verify that state owned buildings be included in the list of facilities in section 6-1602(B)(2). AFSCME Council 3 represents 25,000 State and Higher Education employees in Maryland. This legislation corrects a gap in state law by requiring indoor air quality regulations to be promulgated in order to protect Marylanders from harmful exposures to mold. In section 6-1602(B)(2), this bill also requires annual mold inspections in Public and Private School Facilities, Licensed Child Care Center, Nursing Homes, Assisted Living Facilities for the Elderly, and Rental Dwellings. Our members have children who attend Maryland public schools, many also rent. Our members work in schools as child welfare workers. In the Maryland State Department of Education and they frequent childcare centers to do inspections. Ensuring healthful air quality at work, and at home is of paramount importance to the hard-working, dedicated employees we represent.

As written, it's unclear however if the list of facilities mentioned in section 6-1602(B)(2) would include state buildings. The Maryland Department of Health for instance operates two Chronic Hospitals in Wicomico and Washington County that have nursing home units. Both hospitals have had issues with mold in recent years, potentially exposing both patients and staff to the harmful effects of mold. Our institutions of Higher Education have also had documented mold issues. We are interested in seeing if HB 1540 can be amended to include additional state offices and institutions.

HB1540 is a good bill. It establishes indoor air quality standards in Maryland. With a changing climate, it's more important than ever to have indoor air quality standards in our state laws to protect Marylanders from to the harmful health effects caused from mold exposure.

For all of these reasons, we urge the committee to provide a favorable report with the amendments that verify whether state owned buildings in section 6-1602(B)(2) are included. Thank you.

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