UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

March 4, 2020

Chairman Kumar Barve
Environment & Transportation Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street, Room 251
Annapolis, MD 21401

Testimony for House Bill 1540 - Favorable

Dear Chairman Barve, Vice-Chairman Stein, and members of the Environment & Transportation Committee:

The appearance of mold in Woods Hall on the University of Maryland campus was first documented in a faculty office in 2012. Facilities Management responded by cleaning the mold. Over the next several years the mold was detected in several more places in Woods Hall.

The university provided incremental remedies to address the mold issue in Woods Hall. Over the course of three years - three of the building's foundation walls were sealed and waterproofed. However, the mold kept appearing in offices – on walls, on ceilings, and on books and furniture. The mold situation has ruined the libraries of several faculty members.

In 2018 and 2019 a few faculty members suffered from respiratory issues – and they were moved out of Woods Hall. Some faculty and students suffered from rashes, and classes had to be moved out of Woods Hall in order to accommodate these students.

I see several issues when dealing with mold in this building:
First, there are no EPA standards for airborne mold. So, if there is mold in some hidden place, there will be airborne mold and it will impact the occupants of the building.

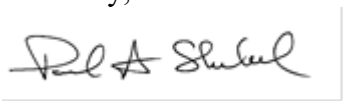
Second, when dealing with the mold problem in Woods Hall, Facilities Management treated the location of the mold sighting, however, there was no extensive investigation in the building to detect mold elsewhere. For instance, mold was found on the chilling pipes that run through Woods Hall, which are covered by ceiling tiles. (It runs through Woods Hall, although it does not service Woods Hall. This building has individual AC units in windows.) There was no inspection of the chilling pipes until the system failed and it had to be repaired.

Third, ceiling tiles in the Women's bathroom were black with mold. The ceiling tiles were replaced, and at the time, no mold remediation occurred – and initially the leaking pipe was not repaired.

At present, the University has increased their efforts to remediate the mold in Woods Hall. The chilling pipe has been repaired. One of the office spaces has been renovated with a new air circulation system (DX system). Air conditioners are being replaced in offices and classrooms, and they will be centrally controlled for temperature and humidity. The ground floor has a new pressurized system - to help keep humidity out of the building. New windows will be installed Woods Hall during the summer of 2020.

I see that it is imperative is that some type of mold protocol be developed – which includes a wider search/examination of the building if mold is detected. It is necessary for the health and safety of faculty, students, and staff. Also, as a faculty member at the University of Maryland I find it unconscionable that an academic program is being asked to pay for a portion of these renovations. I am not certain why an academic unit should pay for the maintenance of the building it occupies. Poorer departments tend to occupy the older facilities on campus, and by taking money from them only impacts their ability to support research and support students. I am not certain if that is the way an R-1 institution should operate.

Sincerely,



Paul A. Shackel
Professor and Chair