

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly

2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE**Revised**Senate Bill 283 (Senator Conway, *et al.*)

Economic and Environmental Affairs

Environmental Matters

Task Force on Indoor Air Quality

This bill establishes a 20-member 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 heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems of office buildings. The task force must make recommendations regarding: (1) the prevention of workers' HVAC-related illnesses; (2) the institution of appropriate remedies and controls; (3) a plan to provide educational information, and, as may be necessary, warnings to affected workers; and (4) legislative or regulatory measures that are necessary and appropriate to address current gaps in federal, State, and local protection of office workers from HVAC-borne toxins. Members serve without compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), and the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR) must provide staff support for the task force. The task force must submit a final report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by July 1, 2002.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2001 and sunsets July 31, 2002.

Fiscal Summary

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

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: None applicable.

Background: During the energy crisis in the 1970s, buildings were designed with better insulation in an effort to reduce energy costs. However, buildings sealed to preserve conditioned air also preserved and concentrated air contaminants released by building components and operations. The ventilation systems also became breeding grounds for microorganisms, resulting in the re-circulation of contaminated air. The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health reports that several factors contribute to poor indoor air quality, including inadequate ventilation, air contaminants from inside the building, air contaminants from outside the building, microbial contamination, and other causes.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of the Environment; Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation; Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader – February 7, 2001
mld/jr Revised – Senate Third Reader – March 19, 2001
Revised – Enrolled Bill – April 25, 2001

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