

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2006 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 243 (Delegate Smigiel, *et al.*)  
Health and Government Operations

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**Task Force on Indoor Air Quality in Educational Institutions**

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This bill establishes a Task Force on Indoor Air Quality in Educational Institutions. The task force must 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 heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. A final report of its findings and recommendations must be submitted by July 1, 2007. 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 for the task force.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2006 and sunsets July 31, 2007.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** MDE, DHMH, MSDE, and USM could staff the task force with existing personnel and resources. Expense reimbursements for task force members could be paid from existing budgeted resources.

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

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law/Background:** Governmental responsibility regarding indoor air quality has historically been allocated to MDE; DHMH; and the Department of Labor, Licensing,

and Regulation. Local health departments are also often involved. Monitoring indoor air quality in public elementary and secondary schools is the responsibility of the local school systems.

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 advises that it 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. In its February 2004 final report, the Task Force to Study Public School Facilities documented a need for \$150.2 million in school improvements to bring existing public elementary and secondary schools up to established indoor air quality standards.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** A similar bill was introduced last year as HB 350. It received an unfavorable report from the House Health and Government Operations Committee.

**Cross File:** None.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 3, 2006  
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Analysis by: Mark W. Collins

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510