



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HOUSE BILL 1052

**UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND – CONTAMINANTS IN CAMPUS BUILDINGS – REVIEW,
MONITORING AND REMEDIATION**

March 10, 2020

MADAM CHAIR, MR. VICE CHAIR, MEMBERS OF THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT HB 1052 REQUIRING UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MD MEMBER INSTITUTIONS TO CONDUCT ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORIES OF CAMPUS BUILDINGS FOR THE PRESENCE OF MOLD AND OTHER AGENTS THAT MAY BE TOXIC TO STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF.

THE PROBLEM: UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND INSTITUTIONS HAVE HUNDREDS OF BUILDINGS BUT NO INVENTORY, REPORTING, REMEDIATION OR MONITORING REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTAMINANTS THAT MAY MAKE STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF SICK. MOLD PROBLEMS IN RECENT YEARS HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY PROBLEMATIC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK.

ACCORDING TO REPORTS BY CAMPUS EMPLOYEES AND NEWS ARTICLES IN THE DIAMONDBACK AND THE WASHINGTON POST, MOLD HAS BEEN REPORTED AT ALL 38 RESIDENCE HALLS SINCE 2017. IN THE FALL OF 2018 A SERIOUS MOLD PROBLEM IN ELKTON HALL CAUSED RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS IN SOME STUDENTS THAT LIKELY MADE THEM SUSCEPTIBLE TO THE ADENOVIRUS, WHICH EVENTUALLY SICKENED 40 STUDENTS. OF THOSE, 15 WERE HOSPITALIZED AND ONE, OLIVIA PAREGOL, DIED.

THERE MAY BE OTHER CONTAMINANTS IN CAMPUS BUILDINGS, DEPENDING ON THEIR AGE, THE BUILDING MATERIALS THAT WERE USED, THE CONDITION AND AGE OF HEATING AND COOLING SYSTEMS, AND VENTILATION. FOR EXAMPLE, A STUDY ENTITLED "MOLD REMEDIATION AND HUMIDITY CONTROL AT UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND ELKTON HALL," PREPARED BY BUILDING DYNAMICS OF ASHTON, MD, AND ISSUED IN NOVEMBER 2018 DESCRIBED "LONGSTANDING CONCERNS FOR HUMIDITY LEVELS" AND AIR CONDITIONING INSTALLED IN 2011 THAT WAS NOT DESIGNED TO REMOVE MOISTURE

FROM THE AIR AND ALLOWED HUMIDITY TO RISE, MAKING THE DORMITORY SUSCEPTIBLE TO MOLD GROWTH.

IN A MEETING WITH DISTRICT 21 REPRESENTATIVES LAST SUMMER, LABOR REPRESENTATIVES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK POINTED OUT THAT UNHEALTHY BUILDING CONDITIONS ARE NOT LIMITED TO DORMITORIES AND ARE AT LEAST AS COMMON IN CLASSROOM, ADMINISTRATIVE AND MAINTENANCE BUILDINGS.

THE RESPONSE TO MOLD IN PARTICULAR, HAS BEEN UNPROFESSIONAL AND INADEQUATE, ACCORDING TO LABOR LEADERS. FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF MS. PAREGOL, CEILING DEHUMIDIFIERS WERE SUPPOSED TO BE INSTALLED IN DORMITORY HALLWAYS FOR THE 2019/2020 SCHOOL YEAR BUT WHEN IT WAS CLEAR THE WORK COULD NOT BE COMPLETED IN TIME, THE UNIVERSITY SCRAPPED THE PLAN AND INSTEAD PROVIDED ROOM DEHUMIDIFIER UNITS. STUDENTS DETERMINE WHEN OR WHETHER TO TURN THEM ON.

WHAT THE BILL DOES: THE BILL REQUIRES USM INSTITUTIONS:

1. TO CONDUCT AN ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF BUILDING CONTAMINANTS AND REPORT FINDINGS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY;
2. IF A CONTAMINANT IS IDENTIFIED, THE REPORT WILL INCLUDE THE CONCENTRATION OF THE CONTAMINANT, WHETHER IT HAS TOXIC OR HAZARDOUS HEALTH IMPACTS; AND SPECIFY AND PRIORITIZE REMEDIATION EFFORTS;
3. TO CREATE A SYSTEM-WIDE PROCESS FOR STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF TO SUBMIT WRITTEN CONCERNS RELATED TO BUILDING CONTAMINATION; AND
4. TO INCLUDE AN EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS ON NEW OR RECURRING BUILDING CONTAMINATION FROM HIGHER TEMPERATURES, INCREASED RAINFALL AND OTHER CONDITIONS ASSOCIATED WITH CLIMATE CHANGE. THIS PROVISION REFLECTS THE FACT THAT 2018 WAS THE WETTEST YEAR ON RECORD IN MD WITH 72 INCHES OF PRECIPITATION AT THURGOOD MARSHALL AIRPORT, NEARLY TWICE THE STATE AVERAGE. DRAMATIC INCREASES IN RAINFALL CAUSE THE KIND OF HUMIDITY THAT FOSTERS MOLD GROWTH.

THE STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES, FACULTY AND STAFF OF OUR USM INSTITUTIONS DESERVE ACCURATE INFORMATION ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINATION IN CAMPUS BUILDINGS SO THEY CAN MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR HEALTH AND WELL BEING AND ON TREATMENT IN THE CASE OF EXPOSURE.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION AND I URGE A FAVORABLE REPORT ON HB 1052.

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