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**HB 1428 – Environment - Higher Education Facilities - Mold Hazards
and Mold or Moisture Problems
Appropriations
March 5, 2020
Support**

My name is Keith Wrightson and I am a Health & Safety Specialist with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) International Union. On behalf of the 6,500 employees AFSCME represents in Maryland's higher education system, I am writing to respectfully urge you to support HB 1428.

The University of Maryland system alone is composed of over 200,000 students, staff and faculty working, conducting research, studying and even living in over 1,100 buildings across the state.¹ HB 1428 will better protect the health and well-being of those who live within, work in and visit the University of Maryland system and other public and private institutions of higher education by requiring regular monitoring for and remediation of mold hazards, as well as notice to students, staff and faculty when the presence of such a hazard has been identified.

Mold can have many adverse health effects. For some people, mold can cause a stuffy nose, sore throat, coughing or wheezing, burning eyes or skin rash. People with asthma or who are allergic to mold may have severe reactions. After contact with certain molds, individuals with chronic respiratory disease may have difficulty breathing, and those who are immunocompromised may be at increased risk for lung infection.²

Mold will grow where there is moisture, such as around leaks in roofs, windows or pipes, or where there has been a flood. Mold grows on paper, cardboard, ceiling tiles and wood. Mold can also grow in dust, paints, wallpaper, insulation, drywall, carpet, fabric and upholstery.

HB 1428 ensures that any potential issues with mold hazards are addressed in a timely way by:

- Establishing exposure limits for indoor concentrations of mold.
- Establishing procedures for inspecting for mold.
- Establishing procedures for mold remediation.

¹ About USM. The University of Maryland System. Webpage viewed on 2/22/20.

https://www.usmd.edu/about_usm/

² Mold. National Institute of Environmental Health and Safety. Webpage viewed on 2/22/20.

<https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/mold/index.cfm>

HB 1428 will substantially increase the number, types and timeliness of inspections for mold, which will allow for building system professionals to identify emerging mold hazards. This legislation also creates exposure limits for mold. This will reduce upper respiratory tract symptoms, cough and wheeze in otherwise healthy people; asthma symptoms in people with asthma; and hypersensitivity pneumonitis in individuals susceptible to that immune-mediated condition. HB 1428 also establishes clear guidelines for the remediation of mold, and we believe this ensures remediation efforts will be performed by contractors who have the skills necessary to complete this specialized work in a professional manner.

For these reasons, AFSCME strongly urges you to vote in favor of HB 1428 when it comes before you for a vote.