MARYLAND STATE TREASURER
Nancy K. Kopp

Written Testimony of State Treasurer Nancy K. Kopp

Before the
Appropriations Committee

March 10, 2020

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, I write you today as your representative on the Board of Public Works and steward of the State's Insurance program to urge your consideration of legislation regarding mold in our public buildings, specifically, in the bills before you, in our institutions of higher education. The problem the bills address is real and serious.

I am aware that the campuses have initiated programs to contain and combat the increasing problem of mold and its impact on student and staff health and am sure that the Committee and sponsors of the legislation will take appropriate paths to assure that the shared goal will remain at the top of our agenda. Continuous action is not inexpensive, but the cost of not acting is, as we all recognize, even more costly in both dollars and health.

In addition to immediately beginning to address a very real issue in our buildings of higher education, bills such as HB 1428 and 1052 allow for systems to be put in place that can be modified to evaluate and remedy buildings outside of higher education settings, including our own state government buildings. Our employees come to work every day in buildings that are old and, in many cases, have not been well maintained. We and the taxpayers we represent are responsible for assuring that our employees, like the students in our institutions of higher learning, can work in a healthy and safe environment.

Climate change means that Maryland's weather is becoming warmer and wetter — creating conditions that invariably lead to mold and sick buildings. The State should have a clear public plan recognizing and documenting the condition of all our buildings, and programming appropriate resources to assure they are clean and safe. The bills before you start this process.

Thank you for allowing me to comment. As always, I am happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.