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Health and Government  
Operations Committee

*Subcommittees*

Government Operations  
and Estates and Trusts  
Insurance and Pharmaceuticals



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
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**Testimony**

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**Committee:** Health and Government Operations

**Bill:** HB0580 Maryland Department of Health - Biosafety Level 3 Laboratories

**Position:** SUPPORT

Biosafety Level 3 Laboratories, or BSL-3 labs, contain dangerous chemicals and agents that could pose a serious threat to Maryland communities. The locations of the private labs are not being shared with first responders, who could use this information when responding to emergencies in the area. With this information, first responders would know to take extra precautions when fighting a fire or investigating a break in near or at a BSL-3 lab. Emergency officials can also evacuate areas near BSL-3 labs quicker and more efficiently, if they know where they are. Also, BSL-3 labs are at a high risk of being targeted in a terrorist attack. An attack on a BSL-3 lab could release dangerous substances into local communities, so knowledge of these sites could help officials prevent or mitigate a potentially fatal terrorist attack.

The Center for Disease Control's list of BSL-3 labs does not contain all known dangerous agents and toxins. This means many labs throughout Maryland are researching highly dangerous agents in unreported locations. These substances could cause serious illness to people and animals, and are highly transmissible. First responders need to know where BSL-3 labs are located to know if an emergency could lead to dangerous agents being released into the local community. Knowledge of BSL-3 lab locations, prepares police, fire, and rescue workers to properly quarantine or evacuate an area. Without this information, our first responders are left underprepared to protect Marylanders from possible leaks or attacks with dangerous biological agents.

This legislation is in accordance with the 2013 workgroup recommendations about BSL-3 labs. Updated language has been agreed to by the Department of Health, and voted favorably by the Frederick County Delegation.

For these reasons, I urge you to support **HB580** Biosafety Laboratories Level 3 and request a favorable report. Thank you.