



HB7 ENVIRONMENT - PUBLIC AND NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS - INSPECTIONS FOR MOLD HAZARDS AND MOLD OR MOISTURE PROBLEMS

January 28, 2020

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

OPPOSE

Jeanette Ortiz, Esq., Legislative & Policy Counsel (410.703.5352)

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB7 Environment - Public and Nonpublic Schools - Inspections for Mold Hazards and Mold or Moisture Problems**. This bill requires the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), in consultation with the Maryland State Department of Education, the Department of General Services, and Maryland Occupational Safety and Health, to adopt regulations to require periodic inspections of occupied schools in the State for the presence of a “mold hazard” or a “mold or moisture problem,” as specified. The bill outlines steps that must be taken if mold issues are identified. Waivers from the required inspections may be granted under specified circumstances. Before adopting the required regulations, MDE must gather specified information and convene a stakeholder group. The bill also establishes reporting requirements.

While AACPS clearly supports the establishment and maintenance of safe and conducive learning environments, HB7 would create an overly complex and expensive unfunded mandate for local school systems. In addition, many of the environmental hazards identified in the proposed legislation are already adequately regulated by other provisions in local, State, or federal statutes with which AACPS already complies. To that extent, HB7 is an overlap of existing legal requirements and could potentially create conflicts with these existing provisions. Other environmental hazards listed in HB7 have no regulatory framework, vetted testing protocols, universally accepted pass/fail criteria, or generally accepted abatement or remediation techniques. HB7 would, thus, place local school systems in an untenable position relative to these undefined, unspecified, or unregulated environmental hazards.

While unable to price out the cost of such a program in detail given the lack of specificity within the bill, HB7 would likely cost AACPS in excess of \$1 million in inspection fees alone as well as untold millions of dollars in potential remediation costs given our 13.5 million square feet of aging infrastructure.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB7.