

January 28, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Office Building,
2 West Wing 11 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD, 21401

RE: SB 70 Environment – Mold Inspections – Standards, Reporting, and Penalties

Dear Chairman Pinsky:

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 1,100 member firms statewide, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding SB 70 - Environment – Mold Inspections – Standards, Reporting, and Penalties. MBIA Opposes the Act in its current version.

The bill would require local jurisdictions to conduct expansive annual mold inspections in many different buildings and facilities. In all jurisdictions, this would require the addition of significant new resources resulting in costly expenditures.

Counties do not have units equipped or readily available to perform inspections for mold. Typically, local housing departments respond on a complaint-driven basis to concerns over moisture intrusion such as a leaking roof or leaking pipe that may cause the potential for mold. The Center for Disease Control does not recommend testing for mold as parameters for what should be labeled dangerous are so ill defined as to be virtually non-existent. The results of mold testing are difficult for people to understand and are often inconsistent. The inconsistency and general lack of understanding regarding the dangers make annual testing unreliable, the results difficult to interpret, and a significant expense.

Additionally, this bill requires not just one annual inspection but two, one from the county and another from a third-party investigator doubling the expense of the bill while adding no additional value. Since the costs will be passed on to renters, this will have the effect of creating a new annual fee for renters with dubious benefits. In a period of uncertain housing availability, now is not the time to add artificial rent inflation for unnecessary testing with vague potential benefits. This will have an unintended consequence on housing affordability.

For these reasons, MBIA respectfully requests the Committee give this measure an unfavorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or lgraf@marylandbuilders.org.

cc: Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee