

Dear Delegate Lehman and Committee:

I am a resident of District 21. I am active in Showing Up for Racial Justice Annapolis and Anne Arundel County as well as Anne Arundel Connecting Together. I am testifying **in support of Bill HB0129 Mold Inspection: Standards, Reporting and Penalties.**

Mold can be very serious. Molds can cause asthma attacks in people with asthma who are allergic to mold. In addition, mold exposure can irritate the eyes, skin, nose, throat, and lungs of both mold-allergic and non-allergic people. Mold is also known to cause asthma and life-threatening primary and secondary infections in immune-compromised patients that have been exposed. Toxic mold exposure has also been linked to more serious, long-term effects like memory loss, insomnia, anxiety, depression, trouble concentrating, and confusion. Particularly in children with immune-suppressed systems, toxic black mold can become deadly. It can cause hemorrhagic pneumonia, which causes bleeding of the lung tissue.

There are no required mold inspections in Maryland public schools despite a clear problem that has been reported in many counties. One elementary school had to be closed down for an entire year due to mold. (<https://www.asumag.com/energy/indoor-air-quality-iaq/article/20856558/mold-will-close-maryland-elementary-for-the-entire-school-year>). A teacher quit due to health problems related to mold in Howard County, where mold levels in many schools were above industry standards. Children don't have the option to quit..

Molds can be especially harmful to nursing home residents for a number of reasons. Depending on their physical condition, residents may have diminished immune systems and be at greater risk for harmful airborne substances. Many seniors are in no state to clean off molds themselves.

Seniors and disabled residents at Claiborne Place had seeping walls and mushrooms coming up the floor, which an inspector noted was "life-threatening." (<https://www.capitalgazette.com/news/ac-cn-claiborne-place-mushrooms-20180725-story.html>). How is this acceptable?

For years people like Tameka Wright of Annapolis raised concerns about and asked for action to remediate the mold that harmed her and her children in their public housing apartment. Eventually the place was deemed "unfit for human habitation." I was deeply moved when I read about her plight and that of so many others. When I learned that some did not speak up for fear of being put out, I knew I needed to have my voice heard. (<https://www.capitalgazette.com/maryland/annapolis/ac-cn-robinwood-mold-annapolis-haca-20200224-2020224-olgznrqqdrfqdp6xe56yjtecfi-story.html>) I was invited with a group of others to check out two of the apartments at another public housing complex. The plumbing from an upstairs bathroom constantly seeped through to another resident's ceiling. The ceiling looked like it was ready to crumble. It was appalling.

In sum, multiple vulnerable populations of Marylanders who do not have the power to change the mold situation by themselves need you to act on their behalf. They need elected officials to act responsibly to protect them by establishing standards for mold inspection, providing requirements for reporting, and making sure there are penalties for noncompliance.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote in support of HB0129.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Linda K. Girdner, Ph.D.