



Maryland Municipal League

The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

TESTIMONY

January 28, 2021

Committee: Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

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

Position: Support with Amendment

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League supports SB70 with amendments. As introduced, the bill would require local jurisdictions to conduct – or hire a third-party inspector to conduct – annual mold inspections of all rental dwellings. The League is supportive of efforts to identify and remediate mold. However, Maryland's municipalities, by and large, do not perform annual inspections of rental properties. They do not have the staff capacity. Instead, many of them conduct inspections in accordance with their rental licensing process, which may call for inspections every three years or between tenets, as examples. Municipal Code Enforcement Officers will also respond to complaints about mold and may require testing and remediation by the landlord. Local jurisdictions simply do not have the staff budget, equipment, or expertise to properly identify cases of mold through annual inspections.

Instead, MML would support a framework that takes advantage of the local inspection schedule and code enforcement complaint systems in place. Where, in the course of their regular duties, if an inspector observes what they believe to be mold, they must notify the landlord of their responsibility for testing and remediation. If the locality does not have an enforcement mechanism in place, they must also notify the Department that is responsible for the enforcement provisions in the bill (in coordination with verified 3rd parties).

The League believes this framework would be possible with existing budgetary resources and would provide a meaningful step toward a mold-free rental environment. With these changes, MML could enthusiastically support SB 70 and we look forward to working with the sponsor, committee, and other stakeholders toward a solution.

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