



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

February 25, 2022

TO: The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich
County Executive

RE: House Bill 686 – *Public Schools - Health and Safety - Carbon Dioxide Monitoring in Classrooms (Safe School Indoor Air Act)* – Support

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 686 – *Safe School Indoor Air Act*, which seeks to improve indoor air quality in public school classrooms by establishing a Safe School Indoor Air Program in the Maryland Department of the Environment. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for safe and healthy schools, including safe air. The best way to minimize the potential for long-range transmission of airborne diseases in enclosed spaces like classrooms is to ensure proper ventilation and filtration. Increased ventilation decreases the air concentration of chemicals associated with building materials, cleaning agents, and the students themselves. It also helps to alleviate airborne transmission of disease, improve cognitive function and test scores, decrease asthma symptoms, and reduce the number of missed school days due to illness for students and staff.

The program established under House Bill 686 would help reduce illness and improve student performance in our schools by codifying indoor air standards, best practices, and educational sufficiency standards recommended by the Maryland State Department of Education and the Interagency Commission on School Construction. The bill ensures that there is a process for regularly testing and identifying under-ventilated classrooms, fixing ventilation in problematic classrooms, and annually reporting monitoring results.

I respectfully request that the Environment and Transportation Committee give this bill a favorable report.

cc: Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee