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The Honorable Kumar Barve, Chair
The Honorable Dana Stein, Vice Chair
House Environment & Transportation Committee
Room 251 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: [HB 248](#) - Legionnaires' Disease Prevention Act

Dear Chairman Barve, Vice Chair Stein and Distinguished Committee Members:

I am writing in support of this legislation which would require the development and implementation of Water Management Plans by owners of public buildings, including routine testing for the prevention of Legionellosis.

In 2000, I was the chairman of the committee in charge of proposing to the French government a strategy for the implementation of regulations after several Legionnaires' disease outbreaks in Paris (Soccer World Cup in 1998 and the G. Pompidou Hospital in 2000). Our strategy included requiring Water Management Plans in hospitals and, later, in all public buildings, with mandatory control of water systems, including *Legionella pneumophila* monitoring inside these buildings, and a requirement to report testing results to the local public health authorities.

This policy was then formalized through national regulations. Some other monitoring parameters were added, only for hospitals, in the 2005 Water French Guidance in Hospital Settings (Guide de l'Eau dans les Etablissements de Santé 2005). In 5 years' time, the impact of this strategy on Legionnaires' disease cases was excellent. The implementation of these controls and monitoring regulations revealed the need to improve the quality of the water systems inside buildings because the chlorine disinfection had been not sufficient for ensuring consistently good control of *Legionella pneumophila*. In addition to a dramatic decrease of outbreaks and sporadic, e.g., individual, cases, even in hospitals, we have also not experienced any hospital-based Legionnaires' disease outbreaks for a decade.

The same kind of regulations were gradually implemented in many European countries and the new 2020 European Drinking Water Directive requires Legionella monitoring. As Vice-Chair (2004-2012) and Chair (2012-2016) of the Scientific Committee for Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) of the European Commission in Brussels, I can attest to the interest of the different public health authorities in water management plans and routine monitoring of *Legionella pneumophila* to ensure water management plan effectiveness. Culture testing for Legionella is the "gold standard" for regulations. In France, the target concentration level is < 1,000 cfu *Legionella pneumophila*/L, the alert level which triggers an assessment of the cause of this concentration and potential corrective action is > 1,000 cfu/L and the water system must be switched off if concentration levels reach 10.000 cfu/L of *Legionella pneumophila*. The thresholds for required action are lower for areas with immuno-compromised patients.

If desired, I would be happy to share documents and references related to the French and European experiences addressing the risks of Legionnaires' disease or relative to managing and monitoring of *Legionella pneumophila*.

Best regards,



Philippe HARTEMANN