



Maryland

Department of the Environment

Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Ben Grumbles, Secretary
Horacio Tablada, Deputy Secretary

February 25, 2022

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE or the Department) has reviewed HB 686 – *Public Schools – Health and Safety – Carbon Dioxide Monitoring in Classrooms (Safe School Indoor Air Act)*, and would like to provide some information related to this bill.

The bill requires MDE, in consultation with recognized indoor air quality experts, to develop and conduct training on carbon dioxide monitoring in classrooms. Every public school must designate at least three personnel to take the training and conduct carbon dioxide monitoring in classrooms. The bill also establishes requirements for the monitoring of carbon dioxide in classrooms and the type of action/remediation measures required. These actions range from inspections of the ventilation systems, continued monitoring, and/or remediation depending on the monitored carbon dioxide level. Required measures must be completed each time a classroom has an elevated carbon dioxide reading. Currently, there is no timeline in the bill for when the monitoring training needs to be completed or when monitoring of classrooms must begin.

The bill also establishes reporting requirements for a public school and the school system. All public schools are required to report annually to the county school board on information related to the efficiency of air filtration, rate of air exchange, and carbon dioxide levels from the current school year and from the immediately preceding school year for every classroom. The county board must then compile the information into a report, submit the report to MDE and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), make it available on the county board's website, and send notice to the school community.

MDE, in consultation with MSDE, is required to adopt regulations to carry out the provisions in his bill. The Department estimates that a new division would need to be created to work on regulation development, establish and oversee a training program, and undertake general enforcement activities. While the Department currently has adequate and sufficient staff and resources to conduct its mission effectively and efficiently, any additional legislatively-mandated programs or regulations, such as this, could hamper our efficiency, force us to divert resources away from current core competencies, and could disrupt customer service and/or diminish services.

Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor HB 686 during the committee's deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-260-6301 or tyler.abbott@maryland.gov.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

Tyler Abbott

cc: The Honorable Jared Solomon

George "Tad" Aburn, Director, Air and Radiation Administration