



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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**HB 900 - Occupational Safety and Health - Public Buildings - Indoor Air Quality
House Environment and Transportation Committee
March 9, 2023**

SUPPORT

**Donna S. Edwards
President**

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 900. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

The air quality of public buildings impacts everyone in Maryland. Poor air quality can lead to allergies, asthma, headaches, congestion, and the spread of infectious diseases. The COVID-19 pandemic forced air quality issues into the spotlight. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention issued guidance, stating, "Ventilation system upgrades or improvements can increase the delivery of clean air and dilute potential contaminants. Consult experienced heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) professionals when considering changes to HVAC systems and equipment."¹ Maryland residents and our public servants deserve safe environments.

HB 900 requires the state to develop a comprehensive Indoor Air Quality standard and test all buildings. The bill also requires a technical advisory committee to study cost-effective solutions for bringing buildings into compliance.

Federal money is available to assist with these projects. Through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, over \$500 million is available through block grants issued by the Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency Conservation Program. Schools are also eligible for \$122 billion through the Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund as part of the American Rescue Plan. This is clearly a federal priority and failure to act now will only increase the long term costs of these projects.

We urge a favorable report for HB 900.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Ventilation in Buildings." June 2, 2021.