



**SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**Senate Bill 355**  
**Occupational Safety and Health - Public Buildings - Indoor Air Quality**  
**February 23, 2023**  
**Information**

Chair Griffith, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 355. The bill requires the Commissioner of Labor and Industry to adopt a comprehensive indoor air quality standard for public buildings on or before October 31, 2025.

The bill, as written, has potentially significant fiscal and operational impacts for the University System of Maryland's (USM's) constituent institutions, as each campus manages an extensive inventory of buildings, some of which have characteristics often associated with historic buildings and structures. Senate Bill 355 imposes new mandates on USM institutions that cannot be met with existing resources.

The adoption of new indoor air quality standards, as required by Senate Bill 355, includes a **new** requirement that each public employer conduct an annual assessment of the operations and maintenance of each public building's HVAC systems. The annual assessment must include input from employees, including the building's engineering staff, and must consider their comments and those of their exclusive representative(s). Each public employer must certify in writing that each building's HVAC systems have been inspected and are being operated as designed. With many hundreds of buildings in USM building inventories, the new requirement for institutions to conduct annual assessments of each building's HVAC systems and include the input of certain stakeholders in the assessment would be a complex undertaking.

Senate Bill 355 also creates a **new** requirement for mandatory training associated with indoor air quality, tailored to each building's occupants. The bill also creates the obligation for a public employer to receive, investigate, and respond to indoor air complaints; the bill is not clear whether this obligation can be met by the USM's existing employee grievance process, established in the Education Article and through USM policy, approved by the Board of Regents.

Facilities management teams across the USM already perform many of the functions the bill will require, and institutions have an effective process for prompt response to (and investigation of) employee health complaints related to their workplace. Remediation, repair, or other corrections are made when building-related issues are found, and employee health complaints and follow-up actions are documented. The bill would require the universities to hire additional staff and/or secure the services of an outside consultant to

satisfy annual assessment of all building envelopes and enclosures, HVAC systems, and the maintenance and operation of HVAC systems.

Thank you for allowing the USM to share this information regarding Senate Bill 355.



### **About the University System of Maryland**

The University System of Maryland (USM)—one system made up of 12 institutions, three regional centers, and a central office—awards 8 out of every 10 bachelor’s degrees in the State of Maryland. The USM is governed by a Board of Regents, comprised of 21 members from diverse professional and personal backgrounds. The chancellor, Dr. Jay Perman, oversees and manages the operations of USM. However, each constituent institution is run by its own president who has authority over that university. Each of USM’s 12 institutions has a distinct and unique approach to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, with the flagship campus in the Washington suburbs. The USM includes Historically Black Colleges and Universities, comprehensive institutions, research universities, and the country’s largest public online institution.

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