



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 9, 2023

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

### **RE: HB 900 - Occupational Safety and Health - Public Buildings - Indoor Air Quality – Letter of Information**

Dear Chair Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this Letter of Information regarding House Bill (HB) 900 - Occupational Safety and Health - Public Buildings - Indoor Air Quality. HB 900 will require public employers that employ individuals who are required to work in public buildings to bring their buildings into compliance with certain evidence-based standards for safe building operation and levels of contaminants and pollutants.

MDH understands the importance of indoor air quality for employees statewide. MDH notes that the state of the science regarding indoor air quality still leaves many questions unanswered about the concentrations at which chemical mixtures may induce irritation or allergic reactions in sensitive individuals.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it will be challenging to create comprehensive, evidence-based health standards other than measures like carbon dioxide that represent overall quality of ventilation within a building.

MDH appreciates that indoor air quality (IAQ) can have a significant impact on the health and productivity of building occupants, and recognizes that HB 900 closely parallels the recommendations and structure of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) IAQ management plan for office buildings, as well as the 2002 report of the Maryland Task Force on Indoor Air Quality.<sup>2,3</sup> MDH notes that its maintenance and architectural staff are not trained to complete and conduct an annual assessment of building envelopes and enclosures and HVAC systems, nor are staff trained to annually certify building HVAC systems. Staff are not trained to

<sup>1</sup> Mitchell CS, Zhang JJ, Sigsgaard T, Jantunen M, Liyo PJ, Samson R, Karol MH. Current state of the science: health effects and indoor environmental quality. *Environ Health Perspect.* 2007 Jun;115(6):958-64. doi: 10.1289/ehp.8987. Epub 2007 Jan 25. PMID: 17589607; PMCID: PMC1892137. Accessed February 7, 2023 at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1892137/>

<sup>2</sup> "Building Air Quality: A Guide for Building Owners and Facility Managers." December, 1991. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Publication No. 91-114. Accessed February 7, 2023, at: <https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2014-08/documents/iaq.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> "Maryland State Task Force on Indoor Air Quality: Final Report." Submitted to the General Assembly July 1, 2002. Accessed February 9, 2023 at: <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5300/sc5339/000113/004000/004171/unrestricted/20071008e.pdf>

develop and regularly revise written comprehensive indoor air quality plan(s). To comply with the requirements of this bill, MDH will likely need to retain, on an ongoing basis, consultants to perform these assessments and develop the required plan, as MDH does not have these subject matter experts on staff.

If you would like further information please contact Megan Peters, Acting Director, Office of Governmental Affairs, at 410-260-3190 or [megan.peters@maryland.gov](mailto:megan.peters@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,



Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.  
Secretary