



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SUPPORT TESTIMONY

HB 486 - Residential Property Sales - Contract Disclosures - Superfund Sites

The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 251
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Boyce, and Esteemed Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

House Bill 486 is an essential piece of legislation to enhance the transparency and safety of residential property transactions in Maryland. This bill mandates that sellers of residential property within 0.5 miles of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Priorities List (NPL) Superfund site must provide buyers with an addendum containing critical information, including the proximity to these sites. This requirement is not just a matter of enhanced disclosure but a step towards ensuring Maryland's residents' health, safety, and well-being.

The National Priorities List is a unique designation of locations across the United States where hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants pose significant risks to public health and the environment. The federal government actively monitors 26 sites in Maryland. The Environmental Protection Agency's rigorous assessment process for these sites highlights the severity of contamination and the associated health risks.

Under the present system, critical information about proximity to these hazardous sites is often omitted in various residential sales, including new builds and estate sales. We hope that through this transparency bill, the Maryland Board of Realtors' definition of a Material Fact, which is anything that might influence a buyer's decision, will be respected.

House Bill 486 empowers buyers by requiring sellers to provide an addendum with plain language that their property is within a half mile of a superfund site, the definition of a superfund site, relevant web addresses for further information, and a notice allowing the buyer a five-day right of rescission to research their property. It ensures they are informed and can make decisions in their best interest. This is not about obstructing property sales but ensuring that such transactions are conducted with the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

This bill aligns with consumer protection and public health principles. The right to know about potential risks associated with a property is not a luxury; it's a necessity. The decision to purchase a home is one of the most significant financial and personal decisions an individual can make. This bill ensures that such a decision is made with access to all pertinent information, particularly regarding environmental health risks.

In conclusion, House Bill 486 is a straightforward measure to safeguard Maryland's residents, property sellers' rights and clarity for property purchasers. It upholds the values of transparency, integrity, and public health. By supporting this bill, we are enhancing the real estate transaction process and affirmatively acting to protect our communities, families, and the environment for future generations.

For these reasons, I urge your support for House Bill 486 and respectfully request a favorable report.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kris Fair". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Delegate Kris Fair
District 3, Frederick County