

KAREN LEWIS YOUNG  
Legislative District 3  
Frederick County

Committee on Education, Energy,  
and the Environment



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

The Honorable Senator William C. Smith  
The Honorable Senator Jeffrey Waldstreicher  
Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Maryland Senate  
Annapolis, MD 21401

January 30, 2024

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and esteemed members of this Committee:

Senate Bill 125, Residential Property Sales Contracts and Disclosures, will ensure transparency and health equity by requiring uniform disclosure of nearby superfund sites within one-half mile to homebuyers and giving them a 5-day right of rescission if this requirement is not met. What is a superfund site? Superfund sites are locations prioritized by the E.P.A. for treatment and remediation due to “the known releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants”.<sup>1</sup> In other words, hazardous waste was dumped, left, or otherwise improperly managed. Maryland currently has 26 superfund sites that are undergoing various degrees of treatment and remediation.

Superfund sites exist all over the state and people from every type of community have been exposed. Unfortunately, lower income, minority, and marginalized peoples tend to be the largest group of people living around these sites. Further, current law exempts new builds and does not provide for a standard disclaimer. Instead, it merely asks for disclosures of issues “on the property”. The problem is that contaminated groundwater knows no boundaries; no property lines.

My office, our cross-file, and stakeholders have been working on a compromise to reach an agreement on when and how a buyer would be informed of nearby superfund sites. There is agreement among all parties that the presence of a superfund site needs to be disclosed so potential homeowners can make an informed decision. Unfortunately, some of those testifying today only want to advise buyers to learn what a superfund site is and do so by directing people to a website only in the testing phase. My bill requires full disclosure because, unlike a leaky roof that will cost the homebuyer money, exposure to the dangers of a nearby superfund site could cost a homebuyer their home equity, livelihood, quality of life, and more.

<sup>1</sup> Environmental Protection Agency. [www.epa.gov/superfund/what-superfund](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/what-superfund). Accessed January 29th, 2024

A local version of this bill passed the Senate last year with bipartisan support. This statewide version of the bill again has bipartisan support. Just like we do with lead paint and asbestos, everyone deserves to be informed. To ensure that residential property buyers are given a timely and transparent picture of the potential environmental impact to their homes, I urge the committee to give a favorable report for Senate Bill 125.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Lewis Young".

Senator Karen Lewis Young