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5/12/2025

Senator Carney, Chair
Representative Kuhn, Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 1927 – *An Act to Protect Housing Quality by Enacting Mold Inspection, Notification and Remediation Requirements*

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, thank you for the opportunity to provide information in support of LD 1927, *An Act to Protect Housing Quality by Enacting Mold Inspection, Notification and Remediation Requirements*.

The intent of LD 1927 is to provide a mechanism for timely remediation of moisture, leakage or mold in rental properties. This bill supports current efforts aimed at addressing issues surrounding asthma in Maine. Maine has a significantly higher asthma rate compared to the rest of the nation which can be reduced by limiting residential exposures to potentially harmful molds, especially for those most susceptible to negative health effects from mold exposure.

Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) supports this bill as mold is a significant problem in Maine housing. Timely identification and remediation reduces exposure to harmful mold. Maine CDC – Asthma Prevention and Control Program provides leadership and coordination for asthma prevention and intervention activities statewide, and program activities are guided by the US CDC EXHALE Framework¹ which has been proven to reduce asthma-related hospitalizations, emergency department (ED) visits, and healthcare costs. Consistent with national guidance, LD 1927 addresses a known trigger for asthma for children and adult residing in Maine and will reduce overall medical costs related to asthma attacks.

The bill provides a reasonable approach to address moisture, leaks and mold growth in rental housing with responsibilities assigned to both the tenant and the property owner. Addressing mold through mold testing can be problematic, however; mold is everywhere and the interpretation of the results does not necessarily identify a source within the home. Under the bill, a landlord may employ only an insured mold assessment professional or mold remediation

¹ US CDC's National Asthma Control Program (NACP) and its partners help people with asthma achieve better health and improved quality of life. NACP developed EXHALE, a set of six strategies that each contribute to better asthma control. https://www.cdc.gov/national-asthma-control-program/php/exhale/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/exhale/index.htm

professional, after initial inspection. There is a cost associated with employing these necessary professional services, a potential barrier with the intent of this bill.

As the bill refers to municipal code enforcement officer, local health officer and municipal officer roles in enforcing provisions in addition to remedies outlined for noncompliance, Maine CDC suggests the bill be amended to remove requirements specific to these municipal officers, aligning this bill with laws specific to rental properties and prescribing less the duties of municipal officers. 22 MRS §454-A authorizes a Local Health Officer (LHO) to inspect conditions known or suspected to be posing a public health threat and provides a pathway for enforce public health safety laws; this section of the bill imposes unnecessarily on municipal authority and may potentially confuse or duplicate current law.

In conclusion, Maine CDC supports this bill as a mechanism to reduce exposure to mold in homes, and as amended by removing language in Section 5. Mold is a significant asthma trigger, and addressing the root cause of mold (moisture) prevents unnecessary medical costs due to asthma attacks. If enacted, Section 5 should be removed for consistency across statutes governing rental properties and LHOs; there already is municipal authority to inspect dwellings and respond for public health. There is no fiscal impact for the Department associated with this bill, however, employing services of a professional certified in compliance with nationally recognized standards for mold assessment and remediation will incur costs.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions during your deliberation of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Puthiery Va.", is positioned above the typed name.

Puthiery Va, DO

Director

Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Maine Department of Health and Human Services