



P.O. Box 2438, Augusta, Maine 04338
Telephone: 207/626-8115
Fax: 207/626-9015
E-Mail: christy@maineindoorair.org
Web: www.maineindoorair.org

**Maine Indoor Air Quality Council Testimony in Support of
LD 1173: An Act Directing the Bureau of General Services to Ensure Adequate Air Quality in
All State-Owned and State-Leased Buildings**

The Maine Indoor Air Quality Council (“MIAQC” or the “Council”) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to creating healthy, productive and environmentally sustainable indoor environments in Maine. Our efforts focus on the development of education, communications, and advocacy for safe and healthy indoor environments where Maine citizens live, work, play and learn.

Dear Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government:

The Maine Indoor Air Quality Council submits this testimony in support of LD 1173, An Act Directing the Bureau of General Services to Ensure Adequate Air Quality in all State-Owned and State-Leased Buildings.

Testimony

There is a well-established body of knowledge on the relationship between exposure to indoor pollutants and their adverse impact on both the health and productivity of building occupants, as well as risk to the building structure itself. The Council supports all efforts to establish proper management of indoor spaces that includes source control, ventilation, moisture management, and use of best practices to both investigate and repair buildings to reduce exposure to contaminants. A copy of our policy statement on Indoor Air Quality is included at the end of this testimony to further explain this position.

We understand that the bill sponsor will be proposing an amendment to LD 1173 that recognizes the work the Maine Bureau of General Services is already doing to manage Maine state facilities, but recommends some additional strategies to both support and supplement that work. We support Representative Montell’s proposed provisions for the reasons italicized below:

- 1) Add radon as a specified indoor pollutant to the IAQ assessment bill passed last session: (<https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/5/title5sec1742-G.html>). *Radon is the #1 cause of lung cancer in non-smokers, and the #2 cause of lung cancer nationally. Maine is at particularly high risk of radon. The testing data available through the Maine CDC shows that 1/3 of Maine’s buildings likely have unacceptable radon levels.*

- 2) Prioritize efforts to assess the Maine State House complex (per #1 above) and improve communications and infrastructure to manage both the building structure and the indoor environment. *There are many proven environmental management systems that have been developed to assist building owners and managers with creating and maintaining healthy indoor spaces for occupants. [U.S. EPA’s “Tools for Schools”](#) is just one example. All environmental*

management systems rely on the same thing: an organized body of knowledgeable individuals who are tasked with both the responsibility and authority to manage their indoor spaces to reduce exposures to pollutants and oversee investigations and repairs when problems occur. We believe there are currently some challenges for all parties involved in the current management of Maine's most public space that could be overcome through establishment of more diverse oversight body specific to this complex.

- 3) Improve communications around existing processes for receiving and responding to occupant complaints. *Risk communication is a key component of establishing trust between building occupants and environmental conditions that can impact health.*

The Maine Indoor Air Quality Council is willing to answer any questions or provide additional information to assist you at the work session.

Respectfully submitted by:



Christine G. Crocker, Executive Director
Maine Indoor Air Quality Council
Telephone: 207-626-8115; E-mail: christy@maineindoorair.org
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Maine Indoor Air Quality Council
Policy Statement on Indoor Air Quality
Adopted by MIAQC Board of Directors on February 6, 2003
Reviewed, Updated and Readopted: October 20, 2009
Reviewed, Updated, and Readopted: June 2, 2020

Our society has become increasingly aware of the adverse health and economic costs associated with poor indoor air quality. Levels of indoor pollutants (including radon, lead, asbestos, carbon monoxide, tobacco smoke, volatile organic compounds, biologicals, and air toxics and other contaminants) are often 2-5 times higher—and may be 100 times higher—than outdoor levels. Studies have identified a broad range of adverse health effects and symptoms, from headaches, fatigue, nausea, aggravation of asthma and allergies, transmission of infectious respiratory diseases, to life threatening poisonings. Indoor pollutants are of particular concern because most Americans spend about 90% of their time indoors.

The principles for achieving a healthy and productive indoor environment are simple. The goal is an environment that is:

- Clean
- Dry
- Pollutant and Pest Free
- Comfortable

While the methods to achieve these goals may vary, the primary best practice tools are:

- Prevention or Elimination of Pollutants (source control)
- Proper Ventilation
- Thermal and Humidity Control
- Proper operation and maintenance of the structure by the building owner
- Proper use of the structure by the building occupants

Adherence to these basic principles will significantly reduce the risk of adverse health effects from indoor pollutants. Building owners, operators and occupants should educate themselves on and must work together to implement the basic principles and available best practice guidance.

Resources:

National Centers for Healthy Housing, www.nchh.org *The Seven Principles of Healthy Homes*

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/introduction-indoor-air-quality>

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention/National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH)

Resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/indoorenv/resources.html>

American Industrial Hygiene Association: Resources: <https://www.aiha.org/public-resources/air-quality>