



House Bill 129

Environment - Mold Inspections - Standards, Reporting, and Penalties

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Environment and Transportation
Committee

Date: January 20, 2021

From: Alex Butler

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 129, as introduced. The bill would require local governments to complete proactive, annual mold inspections of all rental housings within the jurisdiction. In all jurisdictions, this would require the addition of significant new resources resulting in costly expenditures. **MACo has been engaging with the bill's sponsor to find a reasonable approach that could limit the burden on local governments and provide an increased effort to promote public health.**

As introduced, HB 129 requires that local jurisdictions conduct annual mold inspections in all rental dwellings. Counties do not have units equipped or readily available to perform inspections for mold. Typically, local housing authorities or code enforcement divisions respond on a complaint-driven basis to concerns over either moisture intrusion such as a leaking roof, or the presence of mold. In many cases they are able to require remediation based on the livability code. Many jurisdictions relay the effectiveness of this approach, with some receiving very low numbers of complaints per year.

Although the bill allows for either third party inspections or inspections to occur in combination with already existing inspections, it is clear that coordinating these efforts would be a substantial undertaking - especially as the majority of units do not currently receive an inspection each year. Inspections can be completed upon registration with an existing rental licensing program, turnover of the unit, or in response to a complaint.

Proactive, annual inspections of all rental dwellings will lead to a large increase in the number of necessary inspections that local jurisdictions would need to coordinate or conduct, and would not necessarily yield better results.

HB 129 would lead to costly expenditures for local governments without any guarantee of improved outcomes. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to give HB 129 as introduced an **UNFAVORABLE** report.