

April 3, 2018

To: House Committee on Education  
From: Rebecca Ryan, Sr. Director, Health Education & Public Policy  
Subj: S.257 Section 14 Radon Mitigation

The American Lung Association in Vermont supports Section 14, of S.257, School Radon Mitigation Study Committee. However, we ask that you consider amending the bill to require all K-12 schools to test for radon and disclose the results and to require all new school construction to employ radon-resistant new construction.

Radon exposure is the second leading cause of lung cancer, and the first among non-smokers. School children spend their days in schools, often in the same building for years. School staff and teachers can spend decades working in the same building. Vermont can help to reduce the risk of radon exposure in schools by testing, disclosing and reducing high levels of radon if necessary. Attached is a fact sheet outlining the problem and current state of radon testing in Vermont schools.

We understand the concern that if a school tests high (the EPA action level is 4 picocuries per liter) for radon, it may not have the money to pay for mitigation. However not all schools that test high will have to install a full mitigation system. In fact, according to the American Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists (AARST), the first course of action is to adjust the ventilation and retest. If that does not work, the next is to install a mitigation system that includes a fan and vent pipe. In general, entire buildings do not test high, it is usually a classroom or two that need to be addressed.

Two approaches were considered this session in the Senate Education Committee for testing and disclosure:

1. [S.279](#) introduced by Senator Ginny Lyons and assigned to the Senate Committee on Education would have required each school board to develop, adopt and implement a plan regarding testing for and addressing elevated concentrations of radon at a school facility.
2. The committee also considered requiring the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) to test the facilities of at least 40 schools each year until each school had been tested. It also would have required the school principal to share the test results. This draft ([4.1 - S.279](#)) include language for radon-resistant new construction.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests. If you have any questions, please contact me at [rebecca.ryan@lung.org](mailto:rebecca.ryan@lung.org) or 876-6862.