



Subject: Current Challenges and Needs Relating to PCB Testing and Remediation in Vermont Schools

Dear Lawmakers,

The Vermont Superintendents Association, Vermont School Boards Association, and Vermont Principals' Association are writing to provide an update on the ongoing impacts of Vermont's PCB testing and remediation law on schools across the state. Based on longstanding and recent feedback, the law's implementation has created significant financial and operational challenges that require immediate attention. The urgency to address these issues intensifies daily to ensure stable learning environments while alleviating mounting pressures on school district budgets.

### **Summary of Findings**

While we outline summaries of impacts and concerns below, it is impossible to do justice to the disruptions experienced across school communities. We hope that legislators will make an effort to reach out to local school officials to learn firsthand how challenging contending with this initiative has been.

#### *Access to Educational Facilities:*

Schools with elevated PCB levels have taken drastic measures to respond to the law's requirements. These measures include closing facilities, relocating classrooms, and limiting access to affected areas, resulting in significant disruptions to students and staff. Mitigation efforts, such as improving ventilation or limiting exposure, have impacted daily operations and learning environments, such as noise disruption from running large fans.

#### *Financial Burdens:*

Testing and initial remediation efforts have incurred costs ranging from tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars. Using filters and other mitigation strategies has led to significant increases in electrical costs (e.g., BFUHS). School officials, including facilities managers, principals, and superintendents, are heavily involved in meetings with state agencies, consuming significant time and resources.

#### *Reimbursement Challenges:*

Responses from districts indicate inconsistency in state reimbursement for testing and remediation. Some schools have received full reimbursement for testing costs but not for remediation or follow-up actions. Others noted delays in accessing promised funds.

### *Current Status and Uncertainty:*

Many districts are awaiting further remediation guidance or funding. The uncertainty surrounding the next steps and whether the significant mounting costs will be reimbursed complicates planning and strains resources. As one district shared, “We are awaiting bulk material testing results and guidance on long-term solutions.”

The Vermont Superintendents Association, Vermont School Boards Association, and Vermont Principals’ Association have joined local school officials in expressing very legitimate concerns about the lack of confirmed information and certainty about the State’s plans for the PCB Program, particularly remediation for those schools that have been identified at or above the actionable level. These uncertainties pose extraordinary operational and financial challenges for school districts currently navigating the initiative and for those that may have to in the future.

### Recommendations

1. Officially and formally halt the PCB Testing Program in Schools: The PCB Testing Program, along with any other environmental initiatives, should be considered within the context of a state construction aid program.
2. Increase State Funding: Allocate additional resources to cover ongoing testing and remediation costs for those school districts that have been tested, ensuring that these expenses do not disproportionately burden districts.
3. Streamline Reimbursement Processes: Ensure timely and consistent reimbursement for all incurred costs, including remediation efforts.
4. Provide Ongoing Support: Offer comprehensive technical and operational support to districts navigating remediation requirements.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to Vermont’s students. We look forward to working together to address these critical issues.

Sincerely,

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