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MEMORANDUM

To: Senate Committee on Appropriations
From: Matt Chapman, Director, Waste Management and Prevention, Environmental Conservation
Date: April 4, 2025
Re: PCB Funding

Background

In 2021, the General Assembly authorized the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) to begin testing Vermont schools for PCBs in indoor air. Research has shown that PCBs in indoor air at schools represents the largest exposure for children to PCBs. ANR identified 328 schools that were built or renovated before 1980 (when PCBs were banned by EPA). Over the past 4 years we have tested 145 schools (45% of the total) and 45 schools (31%) were found to have one or more rooms that have exceeded the standard. Based on the limited availability of funds, ANR has prioritized mitigation and remediation efforts in tested schools that have extremely high concentrations in indoor and a loss to use of space over continuing to test schools that have not been tested.

To date, the Legislature has appropriated \$29.5M (\$16M dedicated for Burlington) for testing and mitigation/remediation work. In addition, the Legislature transferred \$4.5M from one special fund in ANR (solid waste management) to the Environmental Cleanup Fund (ECF). There is currently \$3.4M remaining of these funds remaining.

Funding Needs for FY2026

Consultants for each of the schools identified below are developing a work plan for the work that needs to be completed at the school and a cost estimate for that work. The table below represents the ANR's preliminary estimate of what total cleanup costs may be based on our experience in other situations.

Hartford High School and Tech Center	\$ 8 – 10M
Green Mountain High School (Chester)	\$ 4M
North Country Union High School (Newport)	\$ 5 – 10M
Twin Valley Elementary School (Wilmington)	\$ 1M

SOAR (St. Albans)	\$ 2.5M
Bellows Falls High School	\$ 8M

Effect of House Reductions

The proposed \$4M reduction from the Governor’s FY26 Budget Recommend to \$5.5M in FY2026 will have significant impact to our ability to conduct work during the next fiscal year, as the total need is estimated to be as much as \$30M. The proposed reductions will have a significant impact on our ability to make progress this year in remediating issues that have been identified in these schools.

As a result of funding constraints, several schools have elected to sample indoor air or conduct remediation work knowing that they may not be reimbursed. ANR has advised those communities that, provided that they follow our process and contingent on the availability of funding, we will reimburse them for work they conduct to address PCBs when funds become available.

In addition to restoring the \$4M that was requested, we would respectfully request that this appropriation be made effective on passage so that we can ensure that when students leave classrooms in early-June we can have contractors immediately ready to move into those facilities to conduct work over the summer and make substantial progress on responding to contamination prior to students returning to the school.

You can find a summary of the program [here](#). You can find a more detailed overview [here](#).