

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1560
By: Coleman
Public Health
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Mold has recently emerged as a source of public concern. Some types and some amounts of mold are unhealthy for humans to breathe, but there are no government standards by which mold is measured. Indoor mold can cause breathing problems, sneezing, eye irritation, nasal congestion, coughing, skin irritation, headaches, and fatigue. The Texas Department of Health has recommendations for toxic mold levels and suggested methods of remediation, but there still is no quantitative data that determines the levels of mold that are dangerous.

A set of standards should exist by which mold is measured, evaluated, and treated. Private companies should not set these standards. The first step for the Legislature is an objective study, sponsored by the State of Texas, to evaluate the situation. The act directs TDH to conduct a review of scientific information related to mold. The review should include a study of scientific literature, consultation with experts, and any other available resources.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

The Texas Department of Health will conduct a review of scientific information on indoor mold that determines the types of molds that may be harmful to human health. The review will determine what mechanisms are available to measure the concentration level of indoor mold, identify the concentration levels of mold that have been associated with health effects in humans, identify correlations between exposure levels and negative health effects, identify a human occupancy exposure range, recommend a system for removing mold and determine time frames for re-evaluating "clean" sites.

In conducting the study, TDH may survey existing scientific literature, statistically analyze existing data, and consult with appropriate state and federal agencies and appropriate scientific and medical experts.

The Texas Board of Health may appoint an advisory committee to assist TDH.

By December 1, 2004, TDH shall report the results of the study to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house. The report must identify areas in which future research is needed.

The Act expires January 1, 2005.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2003

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The substitute differs from the original in that the words "toxic mold" were replaced with "indoor mold" and the phrase "study of toxic mold" is changed to "review of scientific information of indoor mold."

The substitute rewords existing and adds new requirements for the study.

The final report is to identify areas in which future research is needed.