



March 19, 2024

Dear Chair Howard,

Thank you for considering HF HF4613. This important legislation would help protect Minnesota renters by requiring landlords to test for and disclose radon levels to tenants prior to lease execution and to mitigate dangerous radon levels. There are currently consumer protections for home buyers, but not renters. The Radon Awareness Act that went into effect on January 1st, 2014 requires all homes sold in the state to disclose and notify radon to prospective buyers. There are no requirements for rental transactions.

Cancer is the leading cause of death among Minnesotans, and indoor air pollution—especially radon pollution—is a very significant contributor. According to Minnesota Department of Health data, 2 in 5 homes within the state have radon levels above 4.0 pCi/L and the average home measures around 4.6 pCi/L—three times the national average. This is why the Cancer Plan Minnesota 2025 included the following in its Objective 15 to Reduce Exposure to Radon in Residential Properties and Other Buildings: “15.3 Require landlords in rental properties to test for radon and notify renters about radon levels in their building.” By requiring landlords to test and disclose information about radon levels in their units and mandating mitigation when required, tenants and prospective tenants will be protected against this known lung carcinogen.

The Radon Awareness Act has inadvertently created a disparity in radon protections to the public due to the homeownership disparity between white people and people of color. For example, the rate of homeownership for white people in Minnesota is three times the rate for African-Americans (76 percent vs. 22 percent). By adding radon protections for renters, this bill corrects a health inequity in legislation.

This legislation is an important step in improving the health of our state. The Minnesota Cancer Alliance is a partnership of many organizations who are dedicated to reducing the burden of cancer. This bill will go a long way to help achieve that goal. All of us at the Minnesota Cancer Alliance ask that you consider authoring or supporting this legislation on behalf of your constituents.

Sincerely,

Sumedha Penheiter
3/19/2024
Sumedha Penheiter, PhD
Chair, Minnesota Cancer Alliance Steering Committee

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