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SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 60

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Introduction
Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is John Arrigo and I am administrator of the DEQ Enforcement Division and I am here to testify in support of HB 60.

Background
The DEQ has received complaints and inquiries about pollution associated meth labs since the late 1990's. DEQ was initially resistant to get involved with the cleanup of meth labs because the environmental laws administered by the Department do not relate to indoor pollution. We regulate sources that may pollute the air outside, the streams or the soil. The Department does not have the authority or standards to regulate indoor air quality or contamination in carpets or walls.

Currently, if a meth lab is discovered, the regional drug task force removes and properly disposes of the bottles and cans of chemicals that may be left behind. DEQ's involvement has been limited to sites where these chemicals have been dumped into the environment, onto the ground, into a stream, or into a sewage system. Thankfully there have not been any sites where the outdoor pollution from a meth lab has been significant. However, the owners of the structure are left without any guidance from the state agencies or local health departments on how to deal with interior of a home or building that may be contaminated with residual chemicals from meth manufacturing.

HB 60 creates and funds a program to address this need. Most importantly, HB 60 establishes a decontamination standard for methamphetamine. HB 60 creates a program within the DEQ to train and certify meth lab cleanup contractors. If HB 60 is passed, DEQ will hire an Occupational Health and Safety Specialist to develop a training and certification program, and to develop standard methods for the assessment, testing and remediation of contaminated properties. In accordance with HB 60, DEQ will also establish procedures to list and remove sites from the required web-based list of contaminated properties. HB 60 also provides immunity from liability for property owners if their property is properly decontaminated or assessed to demonstrate that it is not contaminated.

Passage of HB 60 will help address the concerns about indoor pollution from meth labs and provide a process for owners to have their property cleaned up. The Department of Environmental Quality supports HB 60 and requests a do-pass vote. Mr. Chairman, that concludes my testimony and I will remain available for questions.