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Senate Energy & Telecomm. Comm.

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To whom it may concern;

I am pleased to write a letter of support for instituting 'green, healthy and sustainable' standards for Montana Schools.

According to the EPA, we spend 90% of our time indoors and our indoor air can be up to 5 times as polluted as outdoor air. Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of air pollution as they breathe 2-3 times more air than adults. Children up until the age of 7 have no blood/brain barrier and as such, are much more susceptible to the effects of pollution as whatever they breathe in goes directly into their blood to their developing brain.

Recent research suggests that a school's physical environment also can play a major role in academic performance. Leaky roofs; problems with heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, known as HVAC systems; insufficient cleaning or excessive use of cleaning chemicals; and other maintenance issues can trigger a host of health problems — including asthma and allergies — that increase absenteeism and reduce academic performance. School air quality has a major impact on asthma and other respiratory illnesses. Airborne allergens or irritants frequently trigger asthma attacks, yet environmental assessments demonstrate that schools often harbor allergen levels at or close to the thresholds that trigger attacks. Research links key environmental factors to health outcomes and students' ability to perform. Improvements in school environmental quality can enhance academic performance, as well as teacher and staff productivity and retention.

The American Lung Association highly recommends instituting 'green, healthy and sustainable' standards for all schools, both private and public.

If you have any comments or want any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Aileen Gagney

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