

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Senators

FROM: Senator Christine Tartaglione

DATE: 1/16/2020

SUBJECT: Urging a State of Emergency on Asbestos

In the near future, I intend to introduce a resolution calling on the Governor to declare the asbestos and toxic schools in Pennsylvania a disaster emergency. Asbestos is a fibrous mineral that has been used in many buildings throughout the country but can be extremely hazardous when it becomes disrupted and airborne. It can be easily inhaled or ingested and can lead to many health concerns, such as mesothelioma, lung cancer, and asbestosis.

Although the Environmental Protection Agency set strict laws to help limit the use of asbestos and prevent exposure to it due to its harmful effects in the 1980's, asbestos has not yet been banned in the United States. This means that there are still many older schools, homes and public buildings that contain it. Many residents reasonably may not know if they have been exposed to asbestos or are currently being exposed to it.

Six schools have already been closed in Philadelphia due to the hazardous conditions of asbestos including two schools in my district. Students and staff at Carnell School and McClure Elementary school have been exposed to asbestos fibers and parents and the PFT have been petitioning to close the schools to prevent any more exposure. Unfortunately, this is not just a Philadelphia problem, it is a state-wide issue that can affect schools, homes, and other structures in any region throughout the commonwealth. This resolution will urge the Governor to declare a state of emergency and allow us to begin the process of mitigating these conditions and bring awareness to anyone who may be affected.

Please join me in sponsoring this important resolution and help protect the health of so many students, residents and workers in Pennsylvania.