The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

February 18, 2009

The Honorable Tara Reardon, Chairman
New Hampshire House of Representatives
Commerce and Consumer Affairs Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 302
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: HB 482, an act relative to mold assessment, testing, and remediation.

Dear Chairman Reardon and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on behalf of the Department of Environmental Services (DES) on HB 482, which seeks to require that persons providing mold assessment or remediation services in residential dwellings be certified by certain professional organizations. DES understands that some revisions to the bill have been suggested by the bill's sponsors, and we support the bill as amended.

Exposure to mold spores in indoor air can trigger serious health problems for people who have allergies or asthma, and some molds can produce mycotoxins that are capable of causing toxic effects at high levels of exposure. The DES Indoor Air Quality Program provides education, information and technical assistance to New Hampshire residents on many issues including mold. Mold has been an increasing concern for New Hampshire residents in recent years. Based on our records, the Indoor Air Quality Program responded to 517 indoor air quality inquiries during the period from July 2007 through June 2008. Of these inquiries, 374 (72%) were related to problems with mold and mold growth in the home. Unlike asbestos and lead paint contractors, there is no certification or licensing requirements to assure that mold assessors and remediators are qualified to perform these services. DES advises homeowners to check credentials before hiring a contractor to investigate or clean up a mold problem, and there are many credentialed mold inspection and remediation companies in the State. However, DES has seen a substantial increase in inquiries from landlords and homeowners who contracted with one of the myriad of businesses listed in the yellow pages under the category of "mold inspection and remediation" who did not have proper training or experience, only to discover after paying for a costly clean up that the mold problem was misdiagnosed or inappropriately remediated, and then had no recourse to correct the problem and rectify the continuing health hazard.

This bill will require that persons who provide residential mold assessment and remediation services for remuneration be qualified to perform such services by obtaining appropriate certification from a nationally recognized and accredited certification body. It also exempts

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mold assessment and remediation conducted on non-residential property, and property owners who perform mold remediation on their own property. It has an effective date of January 2011 in order to give those businesses that are not already certified ample time to obtain training and certification. Since certification is conducted by an independent third party, there are no additional costs to state government. DES believes that this certification program will not only help assure that the health of residents affected by mold growth is protected, but will also provide consumers with the confidence that businesses that provide these services are knowledgeable and proficient.

DES is committed to a safe and healthy environment for all New Hampshire citizens, and it fully supports passage of this bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to offer our support for HB 482. Please call me at 271-2958 or Richard G. Rumba, Administrator of the Environmental Health Section, at 271-1987 if you have any questions or would like further information.

Sincerely,

Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Rep. Barbara French
Rep. Catriona Beck
Rep. Don Petterson
Sen. Amanda Merrill