MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Prohibit Mercury-Containing Flooring in Schools

A. 7896 – Griffin

An ACT to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to eliminating the installation or covering of mercury-containing flooring in elementary and secondary school

JUSTIFICATION

Recent studies have shown that old gym floors in schools that were installed from the 1960’s through the 1990’s contain mercury. As these gym floors age and deteriorate, they are releasing mercury vapors. Children are being exposed to mercury vapors, putting their health at risk. Exposure to mercury can be harmful and adversely impact reproductive, behavioral, developmental, neurological, and physiological functions of humans, and children in particular. Children are much more susceptible to mercury contamination because their bodies are smaller and still developing.

In April of 2019, Miller Place High School on Long Island discovered mercury vapors during renovations of its gymnasium. The mercury levels found in the gymnasium exceeded the allowable standards set in other states. Due to the high levels, the school was forced to close the gym.

As elementary and secondary schools in New York State replace old gym flooring, we must ensure that steps are taken to protect our children and teachers from exposure to dangerous mercury vapors. This legislation would ensure that no new mercury-containing flooring is installed, and that no flooring is installed over top of mercury containing flooring. Furthermore, the bill set standards for mercury vapor exposure in schools that are protective of public health.

SUMMARY OF KEY PROVISIONS

- After one year upon passage of this law no public or non-public elementary or secondary school in New York shall install mercury-containing flooring or cover mercury-floor containing floors.
- Sets a time-weighted average mercury vapor exposure limit for employees or students do not exceed 750 ng/m(3).

CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS

A.7896/S.6145 – PROHIBIT MERCURY-CONTAINING FLOORING IN SCHOOLS

CCE is an 80,000 member non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to empower communities and advocate solutions that protect public health and the natural environment.

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