



TO: House Health Committee

FROM: Kenneth Fletcher, Director of Advocacy

DATE: April 19, 2021

RE: Support for HB 106 Designating January as “Radon Awareness Month” in Ohio

Dear Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo and Members of the Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 106, which would designate January as “Radon Awareness Month” in Ohio.

Radon is a colorless, tasteless and odorless gas that causes lung cancer and can reside at dangerous levels inside homes, schools and other buildings. Exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, after smoking. Radon-related lung cancers are responsible for an estimated 21,000 deaths annually in the United States.¹

Radon forms naturally. Uranium in soil or rock breaks down to form radium, which then turns into radon gas. Once formed, radon enters a home through cracks in walls, basement floors, foundations and other openings. As radon decays, it releases radioactive byproducts that are inhaled and can cause lung cancer. Because radon comes from rock and soil, it can be found anywhere. Exposure to limited concentrations, like those found outdoors, is impossible to avoid. However, when radon gets trapped indoors, it may exist in dangerous concentrations.

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, responsible for thousands of deaths each year. Exposure to radon causes no immediate symptoms, but the long-term threat of lung cancer is significant to everyone. People who have never smoked make up approximately 2,900 of the estimated 21,000 radon-related lung cancer deaths each year.²

The health hazard comes from radioactive particles released when radon decays. These particles can be inhaled into the lung and bombard your cells with dangerous, cancer-causing radiation.³ Smoking and radon exposure can separately increase the risk of lung cancer. But if you smoke, know that exposure to both greatly enhances the risk of lung cancer.

¹ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. [Radon Health Risks](#). Accessed August 19, 2016.

² Ibid

³ Casey JA, EL Ogburn, SG Rasmussen, JK Irving, J Pollak, PA Locke and BS Schwartz. 2015. [Predictors of Indoor Radon Concentration in Pennsylvania](#), 1989–2013. *Environmental Health Perspectives*. 123:1130-1137.

Every home should be tested for radon. Radon has been found at elevated levels in homes in every state and the only way to know is to test. Your home can have elevated levels of radon while your neighbor's home does not. Testing is the only way to determine if you have a problem. Radon testing is easy and inexpensive, and it could save your life. Thousands of lung cancer deaths could be avoided each year if home and building owners acted to test and fix.

By designating January as "Radon Awareness Month", you will be helping raise attention to the problem with radon and hopefully cause more residents to get their homes tested.

The American Lung Association in Ohio strongly supports this bill and encourages this committee to approve it.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kenneth Fletcher".

Kenneth Fletcher,
Director of Advocacy
Ken.fletcher@lung.org
248-220-5213