

March 25, 2021

TO: The Ohio Senate Health Committee  
RE: Proponent Testimony from David P. Carbone, MD, PhD  
HB 106 - Designate January as Radon Awareness Month

May 24, 2021

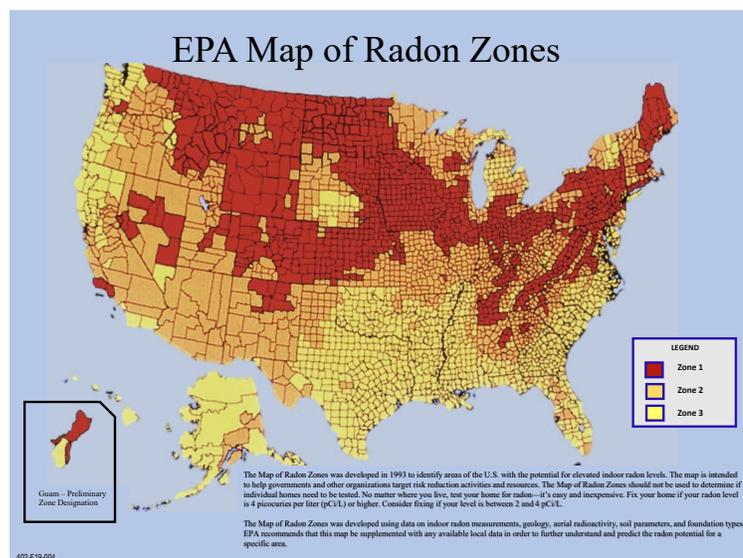
Dear Chairman Stephen A. Huffman, Vice Chair Niraj Antani, Ranking Minority Member Nickie J. Antonio and Distinguished Committee Members,

Lung cancer is by far the number one cause of cancer death for both men and women in the USA and around the world. Radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers, according to EPA estimates, and the second leading cause of lung cancer. It is responsible for about 21,000 lung cancer deaths every year in the USA.

I am a Professor of Internal Medicine, Director of the James Thoracic Oncology Center at The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center, and I hold the Barbara J. Bonner Chair in Lung Cancer Research. I graduated summa cum laude from Amherst College in 1977 and received an MD and a PhD in Molecular Biology and Genetics at Johns Hopkins University in 1985, and a Medical Oncology Fellowship at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, MD. My clinical and research interests, grant support and publications have been focused on lung cancer for over 30 years, so I am well aware of the devastating impact this disease can have. It is particularly devastating for people who “do everything right” – take care of themselves, exercise, eat right, and still get lung cancer due to radon exposure. If you have lungs, you can get lung cancer.

Radon comes from the decay of tiny amounts of uranium naturally occurring in the ground. This decay generates radon gas, which percolates up through the soil into the basements of homes. When radon is breathed into your lungs, it can emit what is called an “alpha” particle that is particularly damaging to DNA and can cause cancer. Radon is colorless and odorless and can only be detected with specialized devices.

Below is the EPA map of radon zones. The state of Ohio has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest level of radon of all states, and is in the top 10 for lung cancer incidence as well.



Designation of January as Radon Awareness Month would be a good first step toward raising public awareness of this situation and reducing lung cancer suffering and deaths in Ohio.

Kind regards,



David P. Carbone, MD, PhD  
Barbara J. Bonner Chair in Lung Cancer Research  
Professor of Medicine  
Director, James Thoracic Oncology Center  
Director, Translational Therapeutics Program  
The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center  
Comprehensive Cancer Center