



OFFICE OF SENATOR SABINA FLORES PEREZ

Chairperson

Committee on Environment, Revenue and Taxation, and Procurement

I MINA'TRENTAI SINGKO NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN

35TH GUAM LEGISLATURE

PRESS RELEASE

Senator Perez Introduces Two Bills to Combat Cancer-Causing Radon

Guam, June 24, 2019 – On Friday, Senator Sabina Perez introduced two bills addressing radon-associated cancer risks on Guam. Bill 168-35 aims to protect children by requiring radon testing and mitigation in school and child care facilities, and Bill 169-35 requires information about radon, including testing results, be provided upon the sale of residential real property.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas and a known carcinogen, considered by United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) as the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. A colorless and odorless gas, it is produced through the breakdown of natural elements, such as uranium and radium, present in rocks and soils.

Historically, dangerous levels of radon have been measured on Guam. Some residential properties have recorded levels as high as 143 picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L), far above the USEPA's recommended action level of 4 pCi/L. The accumulation of indoor radon gas is associated with geological formations of karstic limestone, predominant in northern Guam. "Nearly two-thirds of our island's population resides in northern Guam in areas with a higher risk of radon exposure," said Senator Perez.

Buildings that are constructed in these areas are susceptible to increased concentrations of radon, as the gas may enter these dwellings through structural pores and cracks. "According to USEPA, indoor radon ranks among the most serious environmental health problems facing us today," said Senator Perez. In addition to lung cancer, long-term exposure to radon increases the risk of thyroid cancer, which may affect blood pressure, body temperature, metabolism, and weight.

Bill 168-35, co-sponsored with Speaker Muña Barnes and Senator Marsh (Taitano), mandates all schools and childcare facilities to regularly conduct radon testing and mitigate any dangerous results. "The threat of indoor radon on our children is completely preventable," said Senator Perez. "Therefore, it is essential that testing is regularly conducted to ensure that indoor radon levels do not reach hazardous concentrations, and mitigation techniques are utilized when appropriate," she added. The bill also requires the Department of Administration, in collaboration with GEPA, to conduct a needs assessment of all GovGuam buildings with the aim of identifying additional high priority public buildings to test for radon.

Bill 169-35, co-sponsored with Senator Taitague, Speaker Muña Barnes, Senator Marsh (Taitano), and Senator Moylan, requires a selling broker to notify a purchaser of any radon test results upon the sale of residential real property. "By providing access to this information, we can empower families to make an educated decision concerning their health and safety," said Senator Perez. The bill also requires the Guam Environmental Protection Agency to develop



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information regarding potential hazards of radon exposure, as well as radon testing and mitigation techniques, for the selling broker to provide to the purchaser of the property.

Both bills aim to increase community awareness of radon in private homes and public facilities, and strengthen local agencies to protect our community and youth. "The potential health effects of radon poses a major concern for our island. Bills 168-35 and 169-35 will help protect our citizens, especially children, from the consequences of continuous exposure to high levels of radon," said Senator Perez.

Terry Cuabo, Executive Director of Guam Cancer Care stated, "Radon and its ability to cause lung cancer is frightening. As a government and as a community, we need to take a proactive approach in pushing initiatives to curtail environmental issues relating to cancer."

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