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WA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

Washington State Senate

July 28, 2008

Mr. Treuman Katz, Chair
Washington State Board of Health
P.O. Box 47990
Olympia, WA 98504-7990

Dear Mr. Katz and Members of the Board of Health:

Thank you for your ongoing work to address environmental health and safety in our schools. We appreciate the dedicated work of the Board of Health to protect all children.

We know that the Board of Health staff and the Department of Health staff have worked with many stakeholders over the last few months to revise the Environmental Health and Safety Rule for the Board's consideration. Thank you for this collaborative process. We also know that the Department continues to refine cost estimates of the fiscal impact of the proposed rule change. The Department currently estimates that the operations and maintenance costs to implement the rule change will be about \$16 to \$20 million per year, though that does not include "start up" costs or the costs of remediation. We understand revised data suggests that the costs will be in the range of \$96 to \$120 million over a six-year period. We look forward to reviewing the refined cost-benefit analysis.

As you know, many legislators are concerned about the fiscal impact of the proposed rules on statewide education spending and on local school district budgets. We encourage you to consider delaying the adoption of the rule change until the Legislature has the opportunity to review the final cost estimates and to determine a funding mechanism. A significant part of our budget planning will be dependent on the anticipated Basic Education Finance Report in December 2008. By delaying adoption of the School Environmental Health & Safety Rule, the Legislature will be better able to address the costs associated with rule implementation and to consider the costs of the rule in the context of other budget decisions.

Sincerely,

Sen. Rosemary McAuliffe
Chair, Senate Education

Sen. Rodney Tom
Vice-Chair, Senate Education

Senator Dale Brandland
Ranking Minority Member,
Senate Ways & Means
Co-Chair, Joint Legislative Committee on
School Construction Funding

Senator Curtis King
Ranking Minority Member
Senate Education

