# Fiscal Note

*Fiscal Services Division*

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HF 755 – Radon Testing (LSB2221HZ)
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Fiscal Note Version – New (Same as Fiscal Note for HF 673)

## Description

House File 755 requires public school districts to establish a radon plan and have at least one short-term radon test done at each attendance center by July 1, 2024, and at least once every five years thereafter. All new school construction will incorporate radon resistant construction techniques. If the results of the initial testing are above a specified level, additional testing and potential mitigation will be required. This Bill adds radon testing and mitigation to the list of permissible uses of a physical plant and equipment levy (PPEL) or revenues from the Secure an Advanced Vision for Education (SAVE) Fund.

## Background

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that is colorless, odorless, and tasteless. It comes from the natural breakdown or decay of uranium which is found in soil and rock throughout the United States. Radon travels through soil and enters buildings through cracks and other holes in the foundation. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recognizes the natural outdoor level of radon gas at 0.4 pCi/L. The EPA recommends corrective action for indoor radon levels measured at or above 4 pCi/L. The EPA has designated all 99 Iowa counties as Zone 1 for the highest average indoor radon potential.

## Assumptions

- The Department of Public Health (DPH) will work with the Department of Education to develop the standards, write rules, and handle the influx of additional applications from individuals requesting school testing designation. No additional full-time employees will be required; however, an upgrade to the DPH reporting system will be needed.
- The EPA suggests initial short-term testing in all frequently occupied, ground contact rooms. Public school districts will test schoolrooms within each school building. There are 1,341 public school attendance centers in the State of Iowa with an estimated average of 17 classrooms per attendance center.
- The current cost of a radon test is estimated to be $15 per test.
- Average mitigation costs per building are $6,000 but can vary greatly.
- New school construction is already incorporating radon-resistant construction techniques.

## Fiscal Impact

House File 755 is estimated to cost the Department of Public Health $25,000 to upgrade its existing licensing database.

The statewide cost estimate for initial radon testing for public schools is approximately $350,000. The cost estimate for required additional radon testing to public school districts is currently unknown and will depend on the number of radon tests that provide positive radon results. School districts may choose to use district employees trained in radon testing. Initial measurement specialist certification for radon testing is $275. Initial mitigation specialist

certification for radon testing is $175.  Training for an individual to receive both certifications is $400.  It is unknown how many public school personnel already have certification or would pursue certification.

The estimated cost to public school districts for radon mitigation is currently unknown and will depend on the number of radon tests that provide positive radon results.  Any costs associated with the radon mitigation process may lead to property tax increases through the additional use of PPEL funds.  However, the use of SAVE funds may offset any property tax increases resulting from the radon mitigation process.


**<u>Sources</u>**
Department of Education
Department of Public Health
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Des Moines Public School District


/s/  Holly M. Lyons

April 1, 2019

The fiscal note for this Bill was prepared pursuant to Joint Rule 17 and the Iowa Code.  Data used in developing this fiscal note is available from the Fiscal Services Division of the Legislative Services Agency upon request.