A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO STUDY OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO REDUCE THE RISK OF LEGIONNAIRES' DISEASE IN THE STATE AND MAKE LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

   Whereas, Legionnaires' disease is a serious respiratory disease and a form of pneumonia principally caused by the inhalation of the bacterium Legionella pneumophila in microscopic water droplets; and

   Whereas, Legionnaires' disease is a significant public health threat having mortality rates of 10% within the general population and with significantly higher mortality rates in at-risk populations, a group that has dramatically increased in size due to the long-term respiratory impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

   Whereas, there have been multiple outbreaks of Legionnaires' disease in North Carolina; and

   Whereas, it has been established by scientific evidence that improper management of building water systems may cause or contribute to the proliferation of Legionella pneumophila and can result in Legionnaires' disease; and

   Whereas, national studies have shown that 90% of Legionnaires' disease outbreaks could have been prevented by more effective water management; and

   Whereas, the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) recently developed new guidance about how to minimize the risk of Legionnaires' disease from building water systems; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) The Department of Health and Human Services shall conduct a study to determine what actions the State may take to reduce the risk of Legionnaires' disease in North Carolina by minimizing the growth and transmission of waterborne Legionella pneumophila. As part of the study, the Department shall:

(1) Identify all current measures in place to reduce the risk of Legionnaires' disease, including State and federal statutory and regulatory requirements relating to building water systems and public water systems. For the purposes of this section, "building water systems" are potable and nonpotable water systems located in a building or on-site.

(2) Compare the State's current statutory and regulatory framework to the recommendations contained in ASHRAE Standard 188-2018, Legionellosis: Risk Management for Building Water Systems and ASHRAE Guideline...

SECTION 1.(b) The Department shall report its findings and recommendations, including any legislative or regulatory proposals, to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services no later than April 1, 2022.

SECTION 2. The sum of ten thousand dollars ($10,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2021-2022 fiscal year is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Health and Human Services to carry out the study required by this act.

SECTION 3. This act is effective when it becomes law.