

October 13, 2023

Protecting Against Lead

WHEREAS, protecting the 105 million residents of the region's states and provinces from the dangers of lead exposure is a shared priority of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers (collectively "the Conference"); and

WHEREAS, lead is a highly toxic metal that may cause a range of health problems, especially in young children; and

WHEREAS, when lead is absorbed into the body, it can cause damage to the brain and other vital organs, such as the kidneys, nerves, and blood; and

WHEREAS, the Conference has previously recognized that contaminants, such as lead, pose a threat to human health and the environment across the Great Lakes St. Lawrence region; and

WHEREAS, lead-based paint and its dust are the most common source of lead poisoning; and

WHEREAS, while lead poisoning can affect individuals of all ages, children are at greatest risk because their bodies absorb lead more efficiently and are less able to detoxify themselves; and

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes region contains the highest concentrations of lead service lines in the United States, which can contribute to a person's exposure; and

WHEREAS, replacing lead service lines is the best way to eliminate lead in water; and

WHEREAS, replacing the lines nationwide in the U.S. is estimated to cost between \$50 to \$80 billion; and,

WHEREAS, the Conference acknowledges that after the complete removal of lead service lines, homeowners would need to address lead in internal plumbing, including fixtures; and

WHEREAS, homeowner engagement and participation plays a critical role in reducing lead exposure; and

WHEREAS, funding through the U.S. Safe Drinking Water Act State Revolving Fund Loan program is not enough to meet the demand; and

WHEREAS, federal Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending from the U.S. Safe Drinking Water Act State Revolving Loan Fund program is eroding the long-term financial capacity of States to fund lead service line replacement and other water infrastructure projects; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive approach is needed that allows for leveraging a variety of existing funding sources and flexibility to use funding across programs within States; and

WHEREAS, certainty and stability in long-term federal resources are critical; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes Governors will continue to call on the federal government of the United States to provide appropriate resources through programs such as the U.S. Safe Drinking Water Act State Revolving Fund to support the accelerated replacement of lead service lines. Funding mechanisms should be flexible, maximize grant and no-cost options for disadvantaged homeowners, and benefit consumers served by lead service lines in an equitable manner without regard to income, race, or ethnicity.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference supports the development by the U.S. federal government of national goals for reducing lead poisoning, including prioritizing lead contamination and poisoning across key agencies, including education, health, and Medicaid.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference will encourage the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to ensure adequate reimbursement for providers conducting lead testing, work with the American Academy of Pediatrics to create awareness among providers of the importance of testing, and examine ways that States could use existing funding more flexibly and across programs of state government.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference will encourage the U.S. Department of Health and U.S. EPA to partner with the Great Lakes region to educate child care providers about identifying lead hazards in their facilities and create a toolkit to help providers eliminate potential lead hazards.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the U.S. Department of Labor and U.S. Department of Energy should partner with States to identify strategies to increase the number of lead abatement contractors.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Conference calls for the continued collaboration among States and Provinces to develop regional best practices and calls on U.S. EPA and other U.S. federal government entities to facilitate regional lead service line forums where State and local community partners can convene to share best practices and identify future funding, technical and other support needs.

Adopted by the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers on this 13th day of October, 2023.