July 23, 2020

Re: Support Funding for Lead Service Line Replacement

Dear Representative:

We write on behalf of our millions of members and activists, and as many as 22 million people [A1] across the country who get their water from “lead service lines” that provide drinking water to their homes.[1] These pipes can cause lead in tap water, a known risk to people’s health especially to children under 6, but also posing threats to adults.

We urge you to support the Tlaib/Kildee amendment to the Interior and Environment Appropriations legislation, scheduled to be considered on the House floor soon. This amendment would increase the appropriation for lead service line replacement to a total of $1 billion, a $500 million dollar increase from the committee-reported bill - a timely investment in removing the 6 to 10 million lead service lines[2] that contaminate our tap water. You will recall that on July 1 the House authorized $4.5 billion in funding for lead service line replacement through a previous Tlaib/Kildee/Slotkin/Cicilline/Moore floor amendment to H.R. 2 (the Move Forward Act) that received bipartisan support and a strong vote of 240-181.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has said lead-contaminated water can harm the developing brains of children.[3] Lead disproportionately hurts children[A4] in low-income communities and Black and other communities of color.[4]

While most of us know about the lead contamination in the tap water of Flint, Michigan, few people realize that lead-contaminated drinking water is a nationwide problem[5], affecting every state. Action is long overdue, and we urge the House of Representatives to support the Tlaib/Kildee lead service line funding amendment.

The Amendment would prioritize funding for low-income “disadvantaged communities” (as defined in the Safe Drinking Water Act), It also would require that lead service lines must be fully replaced to receive funding. This is important because partially removing a lead line and leaving the rest still in use can make the lead contamination worse, according to EPA’s Science Advisory Board[6] and other experts.

The Amendment would take a major step towards addressing what has been called “a long-running environmental catastrophe.”[7] We urge the full House—and after that the U.S. Senate—to adopt this measure to finally launch a nationwide program to replace all lead service lines. We urge you to support this critical infrastructure investment now.

Sincerely,

GROUP NAMES

[1] See<https://awwa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.5942/jawwa.2016.108.0086>

[2]<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-10/documents/508_lcr_revisions_white_paper_final_10.26.16.pdf>

[3] See<https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/early/2016/06/16/peds.2016-1493.full.pdf>

[4] See<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5623116/>

[5][What’s in Your Water? An Updated Analysis](https://www.nrdc.org/experts/kristi-pullen-fedinick/whats-your-water-updated-analysis)

[6]<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/sab_evaluation_partial_lead_service_lines_epa-sab-11-015.pdf>[7]<https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/great-lead-water-pipe-disaster>