

THE DRINKING WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE ACT

U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Drinking Water and Waste Water Infrastructure Act of 2021: Taking Action to Eliminate Lead in Americans' Water

Throughout the nation, aging water infrastructure has led to a public health crisis: lead contamination in drinking water. Nearly 10 million American homes have lead pipes, leaving millions of Americans, especially children and those living in low-income communities and communities of color, at a higher risk of lead exposure. *The Drinking Water and Waste Water Infrastructure Act of 2021* (DWWIA 2021, S. 914) will tackle this crisis and improve public health by investing in programs to replace these dangerous lead service lines, prioritizing investments for line replacement in low-income communities and communities of color. Specifically, DWWIA 2021 will:

- **Authorize significant investments to replace lead water pipes and tackle lead contamination in drinking water by increasing the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Reducing Lead in Drinking Water Grant Program to \$100 million annually, for a total investment of \$500 million over the lifetime of the bill for the replacement of lead service lines.**
- **Strengthen efforts to eliminate lead contamination in schools and daycare centers by expanding the Voluntary School and Childcare Program Lead Testing Grant Program to allow for compliance testing and remediation, and increasing the total authorization to \$50 million annually by 2026, for a total investment of \$200 million over the lifetime of the bill.**
- **Expand assistance for our most vulnerable communities with increased funding for the Assistance for Small and Disadvantaged Communities grant program that can be used to address lead contamination.**
- **Ensure that drinking water supplies that are contaminated with lead are eligible for emergency EPA funding.**
- **Create a pilot program to assess the effectiveness of lead mapping as a way to identify and replace lead service lines.**
- **Increase funding for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) to \$14.65 billion over five years, which can be used by states to address aging infrastructure and fund lead reduction projects.**

Drinking Water Grants for Lead Remediation and Testing

DWWIA 2021 reauthorizes Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) lead reduction projects grant program and increases the program's authorization to \$100 million annually through 2026, for a total investment of \$500 million. This grant money can be used for lead reduction projects, including the replacement of publically owned lead services lines; testing, planning, or other relevant activities with priority given to disadvantaged communities, low-income homeowners, and landlords or property owners providing housing to low-income renters.

Voluntary School and Childcare Program Lead Testing Grant Program

The Voluntary School and Childcare Program Lead Testing Grant Program is amended to expand the eligible use of funds to go beyond just lead testing and technical assistance to include lead reduction, compliance testing, and lead line replacement. It also expands eligible recipients for the grants to include public water systems, tribal consortia, and eligible nonprofit organizations that assist schools and childcare programs in lead testing or compliance monitoring. This expansion will help reach more communities in need.

The program authorization is increased to \$30 million for fiscal year 2022, \$35 million for fiscal year 2023, \$40 million for fiscal year 2024, \$45 million for fiscal year 2025, and \$50 million for fiscal year 2026 for a total investment of \$200 million.

Assistance for Small and Disadvantaged Communities

DWWIA 2021 makes significant investments in the Assistance for Small and Disadvantaged Communities grant program, authorizing a total of \$510 million over five years. This will help reduce lead contamination in small and disadvantaged communities by providing additional grant funding for infrastructure projects that communities may not be able to finance. It also reduces the local cost match for grants under this program to 10 percent and gives the EPA the ability to waive the cost match entirely.

Grants can be used to assist communities in implementing drinking water safety measures, such as programs for household water quality testing, or for the purchase of filters or filtration systems that target lead and other contaminants.

Lead Contamination Public Water System Emergency Funding

DWWIA 2021 reauthorizes an expired authority in the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) to provide \$35 million annually to EPA to assist communities that face a public water system emergency. The fund will help communities mitigate drinking water threats to public health, and is amended to ensure that lead contamination in a drinking water supply is eligible for emergency funding.

Lead Inventory Grant Program

This bill creates a pilot program to provide grants to carry out lead reduction projects in water systems that have, or are suspected to have, lead in at least 30 percent of their service lines. This will allow eligible municipalities to test the accuracy of their lead mapping or other lead inventorying efforts in locating and replacing lead service lines and provide valuable data to EPA on the efficacy of lead mapping as a tool to target and replace lead pipes. DWWIA 2021 authorizes \$10 million for this program, to remain available until expended.

Drinking Water State Revolving Fund

This bill reauthorizes and increases the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF), which expires at the end of 2021. Under this bill, the DWSRF would, for the first time, receive equal funding to the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. This \$14.65 billion reauthorization will provide critical resources to states to upgrade their aging infrastructure and take action to address lead contamination in their water systems.

DWWIA 2021 also ensures that states put at least 12 percent of their funds to benefit disadvantaged and historically marginalized communities most in need. States can use up to 35 percent of their total funds on these vulnerable communities, including on efforts to eliminate lead contamination in water.