



GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE
CITIES INITIATIVE
L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES
DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JAMA Pediatrics study highlights lead in water danger -- 135 Mayors call on Congress to act on the Infrastructure and Reconciliation Bills immediately

CHICAGO, October 6, 2021 -- A recently released report in [JAMA Pediatrics](#) highlights the need for Congress to pass both the Senate Infrastructure and the House Reconciliation Bills immediately, which includes funding for lead service line replacement to be added to drinking water state revolving funds.

"We are asking Congress to act on the bipartisan infrastructure bill and that additional appropriations be put into the House Reconciliation Package immediately to provide further protection for our children," said Mayor Tom Barrett of Milwaukee. "Over half of American children have lead exposure, a toxin that can impact pregnant people, nursing mothers, and children under six. While the legacy of lead paint presents the biggest threat, replacing lead pipes is an important additional step. Even low blood lead levels can negatively impact IQ."

"The infrastructure legislation currently going through Congress includes \$15 billion for lead service line replacement to be added to state revolving funds for drinking water," continued Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot of Chicago. "While this is a great start, solving this legacy issue will require additional investment nationwide. It's for that reason we strongly support the additional \$30 billion included in the House Reconciliation Bill."

According to JAMA, the report "captured individual-and community-level disparities in lead exposure, finding that the proportion of children with detectable and elevated BLLs increased significantly among those with public insurance and for progressive quintiles of community pre-1950s housing and poverty," continued JAMA, "and that substantial individual -- and community --

level disparities persist. Children living at or below the poverty line in older housing or in communities with high concentrations of poverty are at the greatest risk of the toxic effects from lead.”

About The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a binational coalition of close to 100 U.S. and Canadian mayors and local officials working to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. The Cities Initiative and local officials integrate environmental, economic and social agendas and sustain a resource that represents approximately 80 percent of North America’s surface freshwater supply, provides drinking water for 40 million people and is the foundation upon which a strong regional economy is based.

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