



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

June 2022

A Resolution Submitted by the City of Chicago



### Maximizing the Impact of Federal Investments in Lead Service Line Replacement

WHEREAS lead service lines affect the drinking water of six to 10 million households across the country.

AND WHEREAS consumption of potable water from lead service lines may expose humans to harmful neurotoxins, causing nervous system problems, learning disabilities, premature birth, kidney damage, and other lifelong health effects.

AND WHEREAS lead service lines are disproportionately located in communities throughout the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin, resulting in heightened health and safety risks for all residents.

AND WHEREAS several cities of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin came together in 2020 to form a Mayors Commission on Water Equity in order to promote clean, safe, and affordable water for all residents.

AND WHEREAS the Commission developed a suite of recommendations on lead service line replacement; service affordability; water workforce development; and urban flooding, contributing to the infrastructure debate in Washington, DC, throughout 2021.

AND WHEREAS the Commission strongly supported passage of the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

AND WHEREAS the Commission applauds the U.S. Congress' historic commitments of \$15 billion for lead service line replacement and \$11.71 billion for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) over the next five years.

AND WHEREAS the Commission notes that it will cost an estimated \$60 billion to replace every lead service line in the United States.

AND WHEREAS the Commission views the IIJA as a down payment on rebuilding our nation's infrastructure and resolving our nation's drinking-water crisis.

AND WHEREAS the Commission recognizes that the effective, equitable implementation of the IIJA will help sustain the political will necessary to finish the job of removing lead service lines from our cities.

AND WHEREAS the Commission is deeply committed to maintaining an open, solutions-oriented dialogue with state and federal stakeholders with the goal of demonstrating the value of robust federal investments in water infrastructure and delivering transformative results for all residents.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should continue to allow states to use the full 2 percent of State Revolving Fund (SRF) monies in a "small system technical assistance set-aside" to enhance or build programs that proactively identify, reach out to, and provide assistance to rural, small, and tribal publicly owned drinking water systems, particularly in disadvantaged communities. The programs should be designed to help disadvantaged communities identify needs, develop projects, apply for funding, design and implement projects, build capacity, and create training and career pathways.
- EPA should work with states to annually incorporate municipalities' updated lead service line inventories into EPA needs assessments SRF allocation formulas. This is necessary to ensure each state receives its fair share of federal funds under the IIJA.
- SRF administrators should work closely with cities to redefine "disadvantaged communities" in state regulations in order to ensure municipalities where lead service lines are most heavily concentrated have access to principal forgiveness loans and grants.

- SRF administrators should follow EPA guidance to fund the lead service line replacement on both public and private property.
- The U.S. Congress should provide additional resources to the DWSRF via annual or supplemental appropriations to enable SRFs to increase staff capacity to work with disadvantaged communities and process the unprecedented number of principal forgiveness loans and grants anticipated under the IIJA.
- The U.S. Congress should amend the IIJA to increase the percentage of principal forgiveness loans and grants for lead service line replacement from 49 percent to 100 percent. This is especially important since many disadvantaged communities are already at their debt capacity and given the failure to pass the Build Back Better Act, which would have significantly expanded the pool of grants for lead remediation.
- The U.S. Congress should fully fund or increase, as appropriate, the Administration's Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 budget request, which includes \$1.13 billion for the DWSRF and \$182 million for the Reducing Lead in Drinking Water Grant Program in FY23.
- The U.S. Congress should conduct rigorous oversight of federal water infrastructure programs to ensure disadvantaged communities in the Great Lakes receive sufficient technical assistance in order to compete effectively for funding.

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT copies of this resolution will be distributed to EPA leadership; state governors and SRF administrators; the Great Lakes Task Forces in the U.S. House and U.S. Senate; and appropriate U.S. congressional committees.