

EPA Sets New Standards for Lead Poisoning Prevention and Requires Lead Line Replacement Nationwide within 10 Years

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On November 30, 2023, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed its [Lead and Copper Rule Improvements](#), a great step in promoting public health and eliminating lead exposure. This federal-level proposal cites our state's work and model, and mandates that all states remove lead service lines within ten years, matching New Jersey's statewide mandate, passed in 2021. EPA estimates that up to 60% of a child's total lead exposure can be attributed to formula if mixed with lead-contaminated water, underscoring the importance of lead removal from our water systems. This announcement sets forth several new requirements to prevent lead exposure, such as replacing 100% of lead pipes within ten years, prioritizing replacement for impacted populations, lowering the action level, and increasing requirements for filter distribution. Notably, the EPA proposed lowering the action level from 15 ppb to 10 ppb, to trigger water systems to take action.

“Lead exposure threatens public health, and is particularly acute in communities burdened by environmental justice issues. Lead exposure continues to harm children. As recently as 2021, the NJ Department of Health reported that over 3,000 children in NJ were found to have elevated blood levels (EBLL), most of whom reside in our large urban cities, predominantly low-income communities, and communities of color. The EPA's decision to lower the trigger level will save lives, and in particular safeguard our children from the harmful impacts of lead,” says Yvette Jordan, Lead-Free NJ Advocacy Committee Co-Chair.

“There is no safe lead level. Lead exposure reduction is critical for early intervention. The Lead Free-NJ collaborative supports state, local, and regional strategies for getting the lead out of our water, soil, and housing. The Lead-Free-NJ collaborative commends the EPA for strengthening the protections of our nation's most vulnerable population, our children,” says Kelvin Boddy, Lead-Free NJ Advocacy Committee Co-Chair.

The collaborative has nearly 300 members who work together to eliminate childhood lead poisoning. For more information, please contact info@leadfreenj.org