



News Release

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Washington receives money to replace lead water service lines

OLYMPIA – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently announced that Washington State will receive over \$63 million to replace lead service lines as part of the federal bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. This funding will greatly aid in expediting the removal of lead from drinking water systems already underway, led by Washington State Department of Health (DOH).

“Lead in drinking water pipes and faucets threatens the health and well-being of children and families across Washington”, said Lauren Jenks, Assistant Secretary of Environmental Public Health. “We are thankful to Congress, the Biden Administration and the EPA for moving quickly to make these funds available so we can ensure that every Washington resident can turn on their tap, confident that the water coming out is safe.”

Because of inequitable infrastructure development, and disinvestment, low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately exposed to the risks associated with lead exposure. DOH will work with partners across the state to quickly invest funds where they are needed most and accelerate the replacement of lead pipes. Based on a survey conducted in 2016 by DOH to determine the extent of lead service lines and lead component serving customer, we estimate less than 2.5% of home are served by a lead service line and less than 8% are served by a lead component.

Within Washington, lead based paint poses the greatest risk for lead exposure and elevated blood levels in children. Money has also been allocated to support efforts to reduce or eliminate lead-based paint in older housing and structures.

In addition to the money allocated by the EPA, Washington may request up to \$63 million in additional funding to provide low interest loans to water utilities to conduct full lead service line replacement.

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