



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
AGENCY
WASHINGTON, DC 20460

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND
URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20410



October 10, 2019

Dear Honorable Leader:

The United States has made tremendous progress in lowering children's blood lead levels. As a result of multiple federal laws and regulations, the median concentration of lead in the blood of children has dropped from 15 micrograms per deciliter (1976-1980) to 0.7 micrograms per deciliter (2013-2014).¹ Although childhood blood lead levels have been substantially reduced as a result of these actions, some children are still exposed to unacceptable levels of lead. As members of the President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Housing and Urban Development are working to protect children from lead exposure through actions highlighted in the *Federal Action Plan to Reduce Childhood Lead Exposures and Associated Health Impacts*².

As part of our commitment to further reduce exposure to lead from drinking water, today, the EPA proposed the first major overhaul of the Lead and Copper Rule since 1991. Today's proposal presents a proactive and holistic approach that will require water systems to progressively target actions to reduce lead levels at the tap in the communities where drinking water lead levels are highest. By improving transparency and risk communication, the proposed rule will raise awareness that will result in community-level actions to further reduce sources of lead, including voluntary programs to replace lead service lines.

To aid with the potential cost associated with lead service line replacement, the EPA and HUD are supporting states, tribes and cities to fully utilize the suite of funding and financing options provided by the federal government. These options include the EPA's Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund, the *Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act* grant programs and the *Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act* financing program, as well as HUD's Community Development Block Grants. To assist entities as they consider using these funding mechanisms, the EPA and HUD have developed a comprehensive website that provides information on how to use, apply for and meet the requirements of each program. You can view the website at www.epa.gov/safewater/pipereplacement.

¹ USEPA (2019) America's Children and the Environment Report. <https://www.epa.gov/ace/ace-biomonitoring-lead>.

² *Federal Action Plan to Reduce Childhood Lead Exposures and Associated Health Impacts* (2018) https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-12/documents/fedactionplan_lead_final.pdf.

We encourage states, tribes, local governments and water systems to visit our website to learn more about options for funding lead service line replacement. Thank you in advance for your support to ensure that we are fulfilling our joint responsibility for the protection of public health and to reduce childhood exposure to lead in our drinking water. Please do not hesitate to contact our staff if you have any questions. For the EPA, please contact Karen Gude, Office of Water Tribal Program Coordinator, at gude.karen@epa.gov, and for HUD, please contact Stephanie Fila, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Relations, at stephanie.c.fila@hud.gov.

As always, the EPA and HUD appreciate your leadership as a partner in our efforts to protect public health and the environment.

Sincerely,



Andrew R. Wheeler
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



Benjamin S. Carson, Sr.
Secretary
U.S. Department Housing
and Urban Development