



CONSERVATION MINNESOTA

March 16, 2023

Chair Wiklund and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

We write today to ask for your support for SF 30 (McEwen), providing funding to remove toxic lead service lines for all Minnesotans by 2033.

At Conservation Minnesota, we're dedicated to protecting the people and the places that Minnesotans love. Ending toxic lead exposure is central to this mission.

Every day, hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans receive their drinking water from aging lead service lines, which allow dissolved lead to enter the bloodstream. There is no safe level of lead in drinking water; and even low levels of exposure can lead to long-term, harmful health effects. In children, lead exposure can result in behavior and learning problems, lower IQ, hyperactivity, slowed growth, hearing problems, and anemia. Even in adults, lead can contribute to increased blood pressure, hypertension, decreased kidney function, and reproductive problems. In pregnant women specifically, exposure can lead to reduced growth of the fetus and premature birth. Put simply, the prevalence of lead service lines represents a public health crisis across Minnesota.

Despite the real dangers of lead exposure, Minnesota residents and their communities have been left without the resources necessary to inventory and replace lead service lines. With an estimated cost that can exceed \$10,000 per line, the average Minnesotan cannot afford replacement, leaving countless families at risk. With lines already identified in cities such as St. Paul, Pipestone, St. Cloud, Minneapolis, and Duluth, the total cost to remove all lead service lines in Minnesota is estimated to reach around \$1 billion. And although the IJA has provided \$215 million in grants and loans to assist with lead service line removal, the outstanding need in Minnesota still sits at about \$800 million.

SF 30 (McEwen) presents a rare opportunity to permanently eliminate the risk posed by lead service lines, at no additional cost to residents. With an \$820 million appropriation, this bill takes bold action to identify and remove every lead service line in Minnesota by 2033. In doing so, SF 30 alleviates a major burden on local communities across the state; protects every Minnesotan from the dangerous, long-term health impacts of toxic lead exposure; and delivers widespread benefits to the state's economy.

On behalf of members in all of Minnesota's 87 counties, Conservation Minnesota thanks Sen. McEwen for championing SF 30 and fighting lead contamination in drinking water. We respectfully urge members to join this fight and to protect their fellow Minnesotans by supporting this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

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