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## Testimony of Deanna White to the House Preventive Health Policy Division Committee

March 1, 2021

Good afternoon Mr. Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Deanna White and I am the State Director of Clean Water Action. We have been working to protect Minnesota's environment and public health since 1982. I am sharing this testimony in support of HF 938 on behalf of our more than 50,000 Minnesota members.

Let me first start by saying that science is clear – there is NO safe level of lead. Lead is a highly poisonous metal and can affect almost every organ in the body and the nervous system. It is a naturally occurring element found, due to human activity, in all parts of our environment. People can be exposed to lead through inhalation, ingestion and to a lesser extent, dermal contact.

The health impacts of lead exposure are many and varied – fatigue, memory loss, high blood pressure, numbness and pain in the extremities, decreased sperm count and spontaneous miscarriage.

Because they absorb more lead than adults and because their brains and nervous systems are still developing, children under 6 and the developing fetus are most susceptible to lead exposure. Impacts in children can include behavior problems, lower IQ, learning disabilities, decreased bone and muscle growth, anemia, nervous system damage and abnormal kidney function.

HF938 not only reaffirms our states commitment to testing children for lead exposure – the first step in understanding the problem-- but sets a sensible set of goals for blood lead levels and a system to allow the public to track progress. This bill in an important step of protecting our children until we can set a blood lead goal of 0.

In order to protect the health of Minnesota's children, we urge you to pass HF938 today.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deanna White".

Deanna White  
State Director, Clean Water Action