



Minnesota House Capital Investment Committee
Chair Fue Lee

February 24, 2023

Dear Chair Lee,

On behalf of our member organizations and Minnesotans throughout the state, the Minnesota Environmental Partnership and the undersigned organizations would like to express our support for HF 24, the lead service line replacement bill.

Minnesota needs a lead service line replacement program that is:

- **Urgent;**
- **Thorough;** and
- **Accessible and affordable to all residents.**

This bill expresses the **urgency** Minnesota needs. Our coalition strongly supports the bill's goal to replace all residential lead drinking water supply lines within ten years. We are glad to see this bill carry over that provision from the proposal considered in the last session. Lead exposure is a severe, ongoing threat to public health. It disproportionately impacts Black, brown, and Indigenous Minnesotans, children, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes.

Regarding **urgency**: knowing what we know now, it would be nothing less than a tragedy to leave lead lines in houses and poison a future generation with lead. And yet few municipalities are implementing widespread replacement programs, and the lead service lines remain in place. While the inventory work required by October 2024 is important and should be funded, that shouldn't stop municipalities from also starting the actual replacement work, in order to stay on the ten-year timeline. Promises have been made, now these promises need to be kept.

Lead service line replacement needs to be **thorough**. In 70% of affected Minnesota residences, there are both a public side and a private side to the lead service line. Both sides need to be replaced at the same time. In fact, that is the requirement set by the new Federal Lead and Copper rule. It is appropriate that this bill supports immediate inventory work, primarily because that will be how we will be **thorough** and know where the lead lines actually are. That will allow municipalities to target their limited resources.

This bill also makes lead service line replacement **accessible and affordable to all Minnesotans**, regardless of their economic circumstances. Current estimates indicate that at least 100,000 Minnesota homes have service lines made of lead delivering their drinking water. This is especially common in communities with older housing stock. Far too many families still suffer exposure. Unfortunately, for many such families, the cost of replacing their lead service line with their own

funds is prohibitively expensive. Lead service lines must be replaced at no cost to the private property owners.

The Legislature has an opportunity to significantly reduce lead exposure around the state by replacing all these lead drinking water service lines. Thanks to federal support, this undertaking will be more affordable for the state than ever before and **accessible to all Minnesotans**, but we must act now. This legislation will build on and accelerate ongoing efforts to replace these lines at no cost to residents.

In summary, if we only use federal or municipal dollars, we won't be able to solve this problem comprehensively and urgently. HF 24 puts us on a path to comprehensively solve the problem to protect all Minnesotans within ten years. Please support HF 24.

Sincerely,



Steve Morse
Executive Director

Submitted on behalf of the following organizations:

Clean Water Action Minnesota

CURE (Clean Up the River Environment)

Environmental Justice Coordinating Council*

Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas

Friends of the Mississippi River

Izaak Walton League Minnesota Division

Izaak Walton League W. J. McCabe Chapter

Lakeville Friends of the Environment*

League of Women Voters Minnesota

Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light

Minnesota Well Owners Organization

Native Sun Community Power Development*

Public Policy Project*

Renewing the Countryside

Repowered*

Sierra Club North Star Chapter

Solar Bear*

Vote Climate

**denotes non-MEP member*