

TIMBER | MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

The Lead Pipe Right to Know Act

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Purpose: This legislation amends the public health law to require public water systems to develop a comprehensive inventory of their lead and non-lead service lines in accordance with the US Environmental Protection Agency's latest requirements and guidance.¹ Those inventories will then be published on the websites of the appropriate municipal, county, and state departments.

Background: Although lead has intermittently been a feature of water infrastructure for a long time, our enthusiasm for its use in service lines blossomed in the late 19th century and only began to taper off in the late 1920s due to public health concerns.² Those concerns today cover a range of deleterious health impacts that include reproductive effects, respiratory failures, speech delays, poor impulse control, birth defects, cancer, and much more.³ **The overwhelming consensus on this issue has prompted both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization to conclude that there is no safe level of health exposure.**⁴

Because an enormous percentage of Troy's housing stock was built during or before the 1930s, many Trojans are currently drinking water that is contaminated with lead.⁵ As a consequence of that, Troy disclosed that it was in violation of the state lead and copper rule in its 2021 Annual Drinking Water Report.⁶ In the recently published 2022 Annual Drinking Water Report, the levels sampled in the second half of the year are significantly worse.⁷ Taken in combination with the lead paint and dust that is also pervasive in Troy's housing stock, this has substantially contributed to Rensselaer County's very high rate of children with elevated blood lead levels above 10 µg/dl.⁸

In New York State, health care providers typically first test children for elevated blood lead levels around their first birthday.⁹ This means that, during the year when they are most acutely impacted by toxic substances in their environment, children may be consuming quite a lot of lead without anybody noticing. This is particularly alarming for children who drink formula.¹⁰ City officials in Troy have shared that, because we have such a weak understanding of which houses do or do not have lead service lines, they have been unable to make progress on a lead service line replacement program that officially began five years ago.¹¹

Justification: It is barbaric that parents have been intermittently blamed for childhood lead poisoning in Troy – quite often by implication, occasionally explicitly, and sometimes by public officials. We wonder how parents were expected to get in front of a problem they were not meaningfully warned about and that government has been in absolutely no rush to address. **Because we cannot fix a problem that we do not understand, TIMBER strongly supports this legislation.**

¹ https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-08/Inventory%20Guidance_August%202022_508%20compliant.pdf

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2509614/>

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4961898/>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/health-effects.htm>

⁵ https://data.census.gov/table?tid=ACSDP5Y2021.DP04&g=160XX00US3675484_040XX00US36&hidePreview=true

⁶ <https://troyny.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/155>

⁷ <https://troyny.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/1289>

⁸ https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/prevention_agenda/indicators/county/rensselaer.htm

⁹ <https://regs.health.ny.gov/content/section-67-12-lead-screening-and-follow-children-health-care-providers>

¹⁰ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/000992288902800810?journalCode=cpja>

¹¹ <https://cbs6albany.com/news/local/troy-approves-financial-plan-to-replace-lead-water-service-lines>



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