



**CONSERVATION
MINNESOTA**

March 3, 2022

Re: HF 2650 (Jordan)

Dear Chair Lee and Committee Members:

I write to express our strong support for HF 2650 (Jordan). This bill takes critical and long overdue steps to eliminate lead from drinking water pipes and protect Minnesotans in every part of the state from the devastating effects of lead exposure. In 2019, the Minnesota Department of Health estimated that Minnesota has approximately 100,000 lead service lines, although the actual number is likely to be larger.¹

The health risks of lead exposure, especially to children, are undisputed. The American Academy of Pediatrics warns that even small amounts of lead exposure can cause cognitive impairments, learning disabilities, lower educational achievement, and they emphasize there is no safe level of lead exposure.²

Studies have repeatedly confirmed that lead poisoning has a disproportionate impact on low income children. Children under the age of six in Minnesota who live areas with more poverty than the state average are more than two times as likely to have lead poisoning.³ A recent nationwide study found that 60.2% of children living below the poverty line had detectable blood lead levels compared to 38.8% of children not living in poverty.⁴

Recent concern about childhood lead exposure has resulted in changes to federal rules that will require communities to inventory and map lead service lines in the coming years. In addition, increased federal funding for lead pipe replacement will be made available. However, state policy will in large part dictate the speed with which these changes are deployed to protect the public from lead exposure.

We strongly support the provisions of HF 2650 that would create a program for eliminating all lead service lines in the state by a date certain and would provide the direct grant funding necessary to ensure that cities can map and then replace the private as well as public portion of lead service lines. Given the clear and catastrophic public health risks of lead in drinking water, these provisions represent appropriate and critical steps to accelerate the identification and elimination of these dangerous old lead pipes in our state.

We strongly support HF 2650 which would make significant progress in eliminating the risk of lead exposure in Minnesota's drinking water. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill.

Sincerely,

Nels Paulsen
Policy Director

¹ MDH, *Lead in Minnesota Water* (2019), <https://health.mn.gov/communities/environment/water/docs/leadreport.pdf>

² American Academy of Pediatrics, *Prevention of Childhood Lead Toxicity: Policy Statement*, <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/138/1/e20161493/52600/Prevention-of-Childhood-Lead-Toxicity>

³ MDH, *Health Inequities in Childhood Lead Exposure*, https://data.web.health.state.mn.us/web/mndata/equity_lead#byPoverty

⁴ Hauptman et al.