

VOTE NO on HJ.Res.44: Get Lead out of Drinking Water

We all have the right to clean water, yet tens of millions of people across the nation drink water from systems contaminated with lead.

What are the health impacts of lead?

There is no safe level of lead exposure. The long-term effects of lead exposure can ripple through your community, impacting educational outcomes and workforce productivity, while increasing costs for healthcare and other social services.

Even at low levels, lead can impair children's brain development, contributing to reading and learning disabilities, reduced IQ, shortened attention span and other cognitive and behavioral problems.

In adults, lead exposure increases the risk of hypertension and premature death from heart disease and is also a major risk factor for preeclampsia during pregnancy.

What are the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements?

The Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI) are designed to address **lead in drinking water** by:

- Replacing **100% of lead pipes by 2037** for the vast majority of water systems.
- Strictly limiting partial replacements, which can cause lead levels in water to spike.
- Lowering the lead action level, the lead concentration threshold that triggers more health protective policy interventions, to reduce harmful community exposure.
- Requiring water systems to communicate more frequently and proactively with consumers about lead pipes and the system's plans for replacing them.

What are the health benefits of the rule?

EPA analysis found that the quantifiable annual health benefits of the LCRI are up to **13 times greater** than its annual implementation costs. EPA also found that strengthening the LCRI's lead standards would spare thousands of children from widespread irreversible brain damage and lower IQs. Additional health benefits include:

- Nearly a million fewer children put at risk of developmental problems due to low birthweight
- Thousands fewer children suffering from ADHD
- Up to 1,500 avoided fatal heart attacks in adults



What are the economic benefits?

EPA estimates up to **\$25 billion in annual health benefits** from the rule, including up to \$17 billion from reduced fatal heart attacks and up to nearly \$8 billion from improved IQ in children.ⁱ Replacing a single lead pipe generates an estimated **\$22,000** in economic benefits from the avoided health impacts from cardiovascular disease alone.ⁱⁱ

Beyond the economic benefits of avoided health impacts, replacing lead pipes would:

- Create good paying, local union jobs for the plumbers and contractors who perform the replacements, boosting local economies. **EPA estimates that every \$1 billion invested in water infrastructure creates 15,500 jobs.**ⁱⁱⁱ
- Permanently upgrade aging infrastructure, saving money on water leaks and emergency repairs.
- Preserve property values by an estimated 5%.^{iv}

What would happen if the LCRI is repealed?

If Congress were to use the Congressional Review Act to undo the LCRI, we would return to the far less protective Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR).

- According to EPA, only 5% of existing lead service lines would be replaced under the LCRR.^v This defies public opinion: **90% of voters support an EPA rule that requires utilities to remove all lead pipes in ten years**^{vi} and 80% support federal funding for lead pipe replacement.^{vii}
- Water utilities have already planned to implement the LCRI by the 2027 compliance date. If rolled back, the currently paused LCRR would immediately take effect instead, **leaving water utilities vulnerable to legal action**, as many do not meet LCRR standards.

ⁱ https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-10/final_lcrl_fact_sheet_cost_benefit.pdf

ⁱⁱ <https://blogs.edf.org/health/2020/02/20/lslr-reduced-cardiovascular-disease-deaths/>

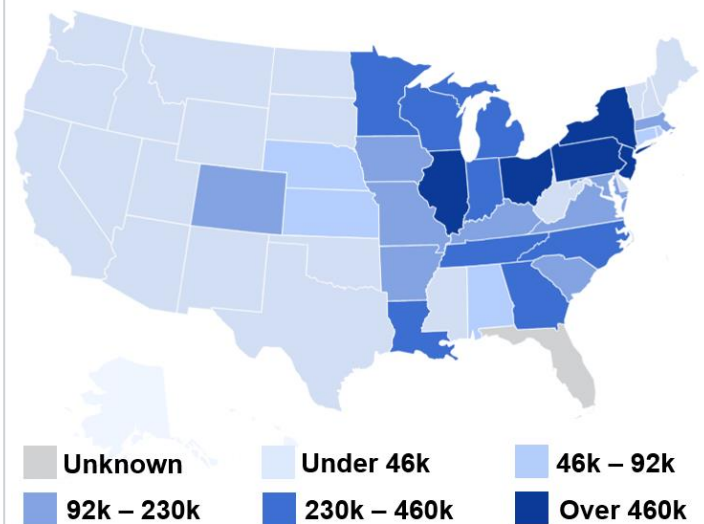
ⁱⁱⁱ https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-10/lead-and-copper-rule-improvements-infographic_508.pdf

^{iv} <https://ucsur.pitt.edu/reports/center-reports/do-lead-water-laterals-affect-property-values-case-study-pittsburgh-pa-2018>

Reverting to the old EPA rules would be a big step backwards that would rob families of critical health protections, reduce economic benefits and leave thousands of children unable to reach their full potential.

Vote “no” on HJ.Res.44 to protect American families and stop the repeal of the LCRI.

Projected number of lead pipes by state



State estimates are based on EPA's updated 7th Annual Drinking Water Information Survey and Assessment (DWINSA), including a 2023 "one-time update." Florida is marked as unknown given significant flaws in state data.

^v <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/12/17/2021-27457/review-of-the-national-primary-drinking-water-regulation-lead-and-copper-rule-revisions-lcrr#:~:text=EPA%20estimates%20that%20the%20LCRR%20would%20result%20in%20replacements%20of%20only%20approximately%20five%20percent%20of%20Ls%20over%20a%2035%2Dyear%20period>

^{vi} <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/lead-copper-rule-survey-memo-policy-makers-20221109.pdf>

^{vii} <https://www.edf.org/media/new-poll-overwhelming-bipartisan-support-funding-lead-pipe-replacement>

For more information, please contact Carrie Murton, Legislative Policy Analyst, 703 795 7768, cmurton@edf.org

Environmental Defense Fund

257 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10010

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[EDF.org](https://www.edf.org)

T 212 505 2100