

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 12, 2025

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Zeldin,

We write to urge you to take immediate and decisive action to release all FY25 funds appropriated through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) for lead service line replacement. Communities across the nation are already rapidly falling behind their obligations to meet the EPA's Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI), and further delays put children and families at risk of easily preventable lead poisoning. Recent reports that the Trump Administration has withheld or delayed the release of federal funding for political reasons are deeply concerning and represent a dangerous politicization of resources that are vital to public health and safety.

It has long been established that there is no safe level of lead exposure. Even minimal contact with lead can cause permanent and devastating harm, particularly to children, who are most vulnerable to its toxic effects. Lead poisoning is not just a health issue, it is a direct threat to a child's ability to learn, grow, and thrive. Exposure has been linked to irreversible brain and nervous system damage, slowed growth and development, learning disabilities, and behavioral problems that last a lifetime¹. These harms are not hypothetical, as nearly 500,000 children in the United States under 5 years old currently have high levels of lead in their blood². Lead poisoning is preventable, but only if communities have the resources to act.

Under federal rules issued by the EPA, each community must replace all of its lead service lines by 2037, with a limited number of communities allowed a longer timeline. However, many of these cities and towns lack the funding necessary to meet the anticipated deadline. Chicago provides the clearest example of the scope of this crisis. With an estimated 400,000 lead service lines, the most in the country, the city must remove at least 20,000 service lines each year to comply with federal requirements. Moreover, of full replacement for each service line often approach \$35,000 per household³.

But this is not unique to big cities. Communities of every size face the same obstacles. In Peoria, Illinois, there are an estimated 10,500 lead service lines that require replacement, and the regional utility company has already been replacing the lead pipelines for over a decade⁴. However, the high costs of full replacement have slowed the progress of line replacement and will overwhelm existing budgets without swift federal intervention. The reality of the situation is clear: local governments cannot meet federal deadlines without rapid federal support.

Through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Congress dedicated \$15 billion for lead service line replacement through the DWSRF⁵. However, the \$3 billion appropriated for FY25 has not been delivered to the communities that sorely need them to ensure that those at risk are protected from permanent and devastating harm. Recent

¹ [Lead Exposure Symptoms and Complications, CDC, April 2024](#)

² [Lead Exposure Symptoms and Complications, CDC, April 2024](#)

³ [Chicago was supposed to warn residents about toxic lead pipes last year. Most still have no idea. -Grist- July 2025](#)

⁴ ['No secret there's lead in Peoria:' Water company tells city council about lead pipes | CIProud- August 2025](#)

⁵ [Biden-Harris Administration requires replacement of lead pipes within 10 years, announces over \\$168M in funding to EPA Region 8 states | US EPA](#)

⁶ [As Trump withholds funds from blue states, red state Florida just got \\$608 million](#)

reports that the Trump Administration is withholding federal funds from certain jurisdictions, including Chicago, for political reasons, are deeply troubling. Federal resources are not partisan tools—they are vital lifelines intended to serve all Americans ⁶. Using federal funds as leverage against communities based on political considerations represents a dangerous abuse of power that undermines public trust and puts lives at risk. The longer we wait, the higher the long-term health, educational, and economic costs will climb, with costs being borne disproportionately by low-income and marginalized communities who have the least political power to demand faster action.

We therefore call on you to take swift action to release all appropriated federal funds that have been undistributed for lead service line replacement and to take immediate steps to reduce administrative bottlenecks in the future. Every year of delay in replacing these lead pipes condemns another generation of children to the lifelong consequences of lead exposure. The EPA has set realistic deadlines to protect public health; now it must provide the resources and to meet them. We ask for your immediate response with a specific plan of action.

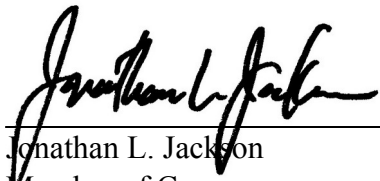
Sincerely,



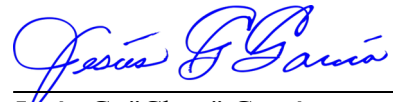
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



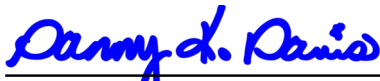
Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress