

Duckworth, Booker, Tlaib, Dingell Lead Colleagues In Urging EPA To Strengthen Lead And Copper Rule Improvements Proposal

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Cory Booker (D-NJ), co-founders of the new Senate Lead Task Force and the U.S. Senate Environmental Justice Caucus, alongside U.S. Representatives Rashida Tlaib (D-MI-12) and Debbie Dingell (D-MI-06), co-chairs of the House ‘Get the Lead Out’ Caucus, led 86 of their colleagues in applauding the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for their proposed Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI) while also urging them to strengthen the rule by considering additional provisions that would improve and

expedite the Biden Administration's effort to remove all lead service lines from our nation.

"While we recognize the challenges for some municipalities to remove thousands of lead pipes in 10 years, the proposal could allow another generation of children in many communities to be exposed to lead from their tap water," wrote the members. "Some cities have been able to replace tens of thousands of lead pipes in just a few years, creating good living wage jobs while providing enormous benefits to the community."

"As part of the replacement provisions, the final rule should clearly ensure that individual property owners do not have to pay for lead service line replacement," the members continued. "We have seen that when utilities charge individual property owners for lead service line removal, often low-income homeowners are unable to pay and landlords refuse to pay. This leaves disproportionate lead in water threats for renters, low-income people and people of color."

"We also recommend that the rule be strengthened to require comprehensive testing for lead in schools and childcare facilities, including tribal educational centers, with incentives for water utilities and non-profits to work with them to install filtration stations to provide immediate safe water and take steps to remove and replace any lead plumbing, fixtures and faucets," wrote the members.

Last year, Duckworth and Booker founded the first ever Senate Lead Task Force to increase long-term visibility around the public health crisis of lead and to oversee the state and federal implementation of the lead pipe removal and replacement funding. Along with Duckworth and Booker, yesterday's letter was co-signed by every member of the Task Force, including U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Ed Markey (D-MA), Gary Peters (D-MI), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), as well as U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Laphonza Butler (D-CA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Alex Padilla (D-CA), Jack Reed (D-RI), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Peter Welch (D-VT).

Along with Tlaib and Dingell, the letter was co-signed in the House by U.S. Representatives Alma Adams (D-NC-12), Gabe Amo (D-RI-01), Becca Balint (D-VT-At Large), Nanette Barragán (D-CA-44), Joyce Beatty (D-OH-03), Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR-01), Jamaal Bowman (D-NY-16), Julia Brownley (D-CA-26), Nikki Budzinski (D-IL-13), Salud Carbajal (D-CA-24), Troy Carter (D-LA-02), Greg Casar (D-TX-35), Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick (D-FL-20), Judy Chu (D-CA-28), Steve Cohen (D-TN-09), Gerald Connolly (D-VA-11), Dwight Evans (D-PA-03), Bill Foster (D-IL-11), Maxwell Frost (D-FL-10), John Garamendi (D-CA-08), Jesús García (D-IL-04), Sylvia Garcia (D-TX-29), Daniel Goldman (D-NY-10), Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ-07), Glenn Ivey

(D-MD-04), Sara Jacobs (D-CA-51), Pramila Jayapal (D-WA-07), Hank Johnson (D-GA-04), Robin Kelly (D-IL-02), Ro Khanna (D-CA-17), Daniel Kildee (D-MI-08), Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL-08), Barbara Lee (D-CA-12), Summer Lee (D-PA-12), Ted Lieu (D-CA-36), Zoe Lofgren (D-CA-18), Seth Magaziner (D-RI-02), Lucy McBath (D-GA-07), Jennifer McClellan (D-VA-04), James McGovern (D-MA-02), Gwen Moore (D-WI-04), Kevin Mullin (D-CA-15), Jerrold Nadler (D-NY-12), Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC-At Large), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY-14), Donald Payne (D-NJ-10), Mark Pocan (D-WI-02), Katie Porter (D-CA-47), Delia Ramirez (D-IL-03), Jamie Raskin (D-MD-08), Pat Ryan (D-NY-18), Andrea Salinas (D-OR-06), Linda Sánchez (D-CA-38), Janice Schakowsky (D-IL-09), Adam Schiff (D-CA-30), Brad Schneider (D-IL-10), Robert Scott (D-VA-03), Elissa Slotkin (D-MI-07), Darren Soto (D-FL-09), Haley Stevens (D-MI-11), Shri Thanedar (D-MI-13), Dina Titus (D-NV-01), Ritchie Torres (D-NY-15), Lauren Underwood (D-IL-14), Juan Vargas (D-CA-52), Nydia Velázquez (D-NY-07), Maxine Waters (D-CA-43) and Frederica Wilson (D-FL-24).

The letter is endorsed by the Natural Resources Defense Council and League of Conservation Voters.

Last month, the Senate Lead Task Force held a staff briefing on an explanation of the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) publishing of their proposed Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI) to strengthen the existing Lead and Copper Rule (LCR). This briefing included presentations from Erik Olson, Director of Health at the Natural Resources Defense Council, Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha who helped uncover the Flint water crisis and Kareem Adeem, Director of the Newark Department of Water and Sewer Utilities that helped eradicate Newark of all its lead pipes in three years.

Duckworth's [*Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act \(DWWIA\)*](#) was signed into law as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and is the most significant federal investment in water infrastructure in history, including \$15 billion for national lead pipe replacement. In 2019, Booker's [*Water Infrastructure Funding Transfer Act*](#) was signed into law to allow states to make a one-time transfer of the federal funds in their Clean Water State Revolving Fund to their Drinking Water State Revolving Fund to address public health concerns as a result of heightened exposure to lead in drinking water, which helped Newark replace all its lead service lines within three years.

The full letter can be found [on the Senator's website](#).