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## **EPA's Proposed Amendments to Lead and Copper Rule Mark Significant Step Forward in Protecting Public Health**

Pittsburgh, PA – November 30, 2023 – Women for a Healthy Environment (WHE) applauds the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed amendments to the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR), calling them a long-overdue step toward safeguarding public health from the harmful effects of lead in drinking water.

"These proposed amendments represent a substantial improvement over the existing LCR, and they have the potential to make a real difference in the lives of millions of Americans who are still exposed to lead in their drinking water," said Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis, Executive Director of WHE.

The proposed rule includes several key provisions that WHE has long advocated for, including:

**Lowering the action level for lead in drinking water and improved sampling methods.** The action level moves from 15 to 10 parts per billion (ppb). In addition, water systems must analyze the first- and fifth-liter samples from sites with LSLs or lead premise plumbing and use the higher lead level of the two samples in the 90th percentile compliance calculation. These changes will trigger more proactive measures from water systems to address lead contamination.

**Requiring all water systems to replace all lead service lines within ten years.** This is a critical step towards eliminating a primary source of lead in drinking water. This is also a unique opportunity to increase our workforce capacity at the local level.

**Expanding public education requirements.** This includes updating the content and the delivery frequency for more proactive messaging about lead in drinking water. When community water systems (CWS) are in exceedance of the action level, they must conduct additional outreach to consumers and make filters certified for lead reduction available for all consumers.

**Requiring that lead service line inventories be made publicly available.** Under the revisions, all water systems would be required to regularly update their inventories, create a service line replacement plan, and identify the materials of all service lines of unknown material. This increases community water system transparency and empowers communities to hold their water systems accountable.

"These revisions are absolutely critical to protect public health," said Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis. "There is no safe level of lead exposures. We have known for years that lead in drinking water is a major environmental health hazard, and these revisions will finally start to address the problem in a meaningful way."

WHE is particularly encouraged by the rule's focus on addressing environmental injustices. Lead exposure disproportionately impacts communities of color and low-income communities, and the proposed amendments will help to ensure that all Americans have access to safe drinking water.

**More work to do:** The revisions do not adequately address lead in drinking water in schools and childcare centers. WHE will ask the EPA to consider a "filter first" approach to lead in drinking water in these learning environments, such as the Michigan law now requires. WHE has tested over 200 school buildings. Its data from the [2021 State of Environmental Health in Pennsylvania Schools](#) report supports the fact that when testing for lead in aging infrastructure, its presence is detected nearly 100% of the time. WHE will ask the EPA to strengthen its compliance testing. And lastly, WHE insists that low-income communities do not bear the significant cost burden of lead service line replacements.

"We urge the EPA to carefully review the additional comments that will be submitted, so that we can continue to protect the health of children and families from lead poisoning," said Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis. "Every day that we wait is another day that residents are potentially exposed to this harmful, but preventable toxin."

**About:**

WHE is a non-profit organization that empowers underserved communities to build resilience, promote equity, and safeguard children from environmental health hazards. We collaborate with families, schools, and early learning centers to create healthy environments where children can thrive. Guided by science, we advocate for policies and programs that foster equitable lives free from environmental harms.

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