



Senator Paul G. Pinsky, Chair  
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re. Senate Bill 992 – Drinking Water Outlets – Elevated Level of Lead (Safe School Drinking Water Act)**

**Position: Support**

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee Members:

We are writing on behalf of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), a professional organization representing about 500 school psychologists across the state. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic wellbeing of students and families across Maryland.

The purpose of this letter is to provide our support for Senate Bill 992, the Safe School Drinking Water Act, which is scheduled for hearing on February 11, 2020. This bill alters the definition of “elevated level of lead” and ensures ongoing testing for the presence of lead in drinking water outlets in schools. Specifically, the bill lowers the threshold for “elevated level of lead” to 5 parts per billion, which is lower than the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s guidelines of 15 parts per billion.

Lead exposure impacts children’s development in several ways. Children exposed to lead have more attention problems<sup>1</sup> and higher levels of impulsive behaviors<sup>2</sup>. They are more likely to engage in socially inappropriate behaviors, have difficulties in language development, and difficulties with adaptive behaviors, among others<sup>3</sup>. These students also are less likely to complete high school<sup>4</sup>. Importantly, research tells us that there is no *safe* level of lead exposure. Altering the guidelines down to 5 parts per billion allows for safer drinking outlets and ensures that our schools are not exposing students to this dangerous neurotoxin.

MSPA is in strong support of Senate Bill 992 – the Safe School Drinking Water Act, and we respectfully urge a favorable vote. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please feel free to contact us at [legislative@mSPAonline.org](mailto:legislative@mSPAonline.org).

Respectfully submitted,

Kyle Potter, Ph.D., NCSP  
Chair, Legislative Committee  
Maryland School Psychologists' Association

Bradley D. Petry, Psy.D.  
President, 2019-2020  
Maryland School Psychologists' Association

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<sup>1</sup> Benfer, E.A. (2017). Contaminated childhood: How the United States failed to prevent the chronic lead poisoning of low-income children and communities of color. *Harvard Environmental Law Review*, 41, 3549-3561.

<sup>2</sup> Erickson, L., & Thompson, T. (2005). A review of a preventable poison: Pediatric lead poisoning. *Journal of Specialists in Pediatric Nursing*, 10, 171-182.

<sup>3</sup> Hou, S., Yuan, L., Jin, P., Ding, B., Qin, N., Li, L.,...&Deng, Y. (2013). A clinical study of the effects of lead poisoning on the intelligence and neurobehavioral abilities of children. *Theoretical Biology and Medical Modeling*, 10, 1-9.

<sup>4</sup> World Health Organization (2010). *Childhood lead poisoning*. Geneva, Switzerland: Author