



Maryland Conservation Council
Protecting Maryland's Natural Heritage Since 1969

SB371: Environment - Drinking Water Outlets in School Buildings - Testing for Elevated Level of Lead

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 11th, 2020

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FAVORABLE

Environment Maryland is a citizen-based environmental advocacy organization. We work to protect clean air, clean water, and open space.

Maryland PIRG is a state based, non-partisan, citizen funded public interest advocacy organization with grassroots members across the state.

We would like to thank Senator Carter for introducing this bill, and Food and Water Action and the Maryland Conservation Council for signing on to support. Our children need safe drinking water – especially at school where they go to learn and play. Unfortunately, lead is contaminating drinking water at schools in Maryland.

Since 2017, we have said we should have a more health protective action level for lead in school drinking water. This bill lowers the action level to 5ppb and increases testing frequency from every 3 years to every 18 months.

Jurisdictions in Maryland have gone further than required by state law: [Montgomery County](#) and [Baltimore County](#) have enacted an action level of 5ppb and [Prince George's County](#) has enacted an action level of 10ppb.¹²³ [The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that school drinking water sources not exceed 1 part per billion.](#)⁴

In 2019, Maryland PIRG and Environment Maryland released a report, [Get the Lead Out: Ensuring Safe Drinking Water for Children At School](#), which gave Maryland a “C” on efforts to protect kids from lead in school drinking water. This was an improvement from the “F” we received in 2017.

We have also submitted testimony on SB992, a similar bill we have worked on with the sponsors- attached to that testimony is additional information on lead testing results in our schools.

We urge a favorable report.

¹ Montgomery Co. passes stricter limits on lead in public school water, WTOP, May 7, 2019.

<https://wtop.com/montgomery-county/2019/05/montgomery-co-to-set-stricter-limits-on-lead-in-public-school-water/>

² “[Baltimore County School Board sets tighter standards for lead levels in drinking water](#)” from Capital Gazette, released October 9th 2019. <https://www.capitalgazette.com/maryland/cng-co-at-county-schools-lead-vote-20191009-zzaxknecejveovn53iromznpedq-story.html>

³ Prince George's County Water Quality Program, <https://www.pgcps.org/water-quality-program/>

⁴ Prevention of Childhood Lead Toxicity, Council on Environmental Health, <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2016/06/16/peds.2016-1493>