



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter

In Favor of SB0371 - Environment – Drinking Water Outlets in School Buildings – Testing for Elevated Level of Lead

Before the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

on February 11, 2020

Mr. Chairman, Madam Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Senate Bill 371 is an attempt to help protect one of our state's most precious resources: its children. The bill does so by requiring schools in Maryland, whose drinking water outlets are found to contain lead levels at or above 5 parts per billion, to take immediate remedial action. Currently, remedial action is required if lead levels of 20 parts per billion are discovered.

Maryland's current standard is too high and is based on an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standard that the agency itself observed was not a health-based standard. Further, the EPA maintains that the only safe level of lead in water is zero parts per billion. Since 2018, over 2,300 drinking water outlets in Maryland schools have tested above the 20 parts per billion standard and an additional 3,800 outlets have tested between 5 and 20 parts per billion. Three sister states have adopted this lower standard - Washington, DC, Illinois, and Vermont. Montgomery County, Maryland has also taken this measure to protect its children.

While there is no safe level of lead in drinking water, this bill gets us closer to eliminating it altogether. Five parts per billion is a reasonable step along that road. And although the cost of acting is not insignificant, the cost of inaction, in both dollars and loss of human potential, is unacceptable.

**As such, I urge this committee to give a favorable report on SB0371.
Thank you.**

Very Truly Yours,

Jill P. Carter