



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

Bill: Senate Bill 546 – School Buildings-Drinking Water Outlets-Elevated Level of Lead (Safe School Drinking Water Act)

Position: Support

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

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

This letter is to provide support for Senate Bill 546. The 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 problems¹ and have higher levels of impulsive behaviors². They are more likely to engage in socially inappropriate behaviors, have difficulties in language, and have difficulties with adaptive behaviors, among others³. These students are also less likely to complete high school⁴. Importantly, research tells us that there is no safe level of lead

¹ 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.

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

³ 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.

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

exposure. Altering the guidelines to 5 parts per billion allows for safer drinking outlets and less exposure to this dangerous neurotoxin.

MSPA supports SB 546 and we urge a favorable report. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please contact us at legislative@mspaonline.org, or Rachael Faulkner at rfaulkner@policypartners.net or (410) 693-4000.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kyle Potter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K".

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