



Dear Dr. Hite,

May 10, 2022

On behalf of the organizations signed below, we are writing to ask you to allocate less than ½ of 1%-- approximately \$2-4 million--of the District's \$1.1 billion in federal stimulus funds to comprehensively address the threat posed by lead in Philadelphia school drinking water, once and for all. This is a critical step that will protect generations of kids from the negative effects of lead exposure.

Since the 2014 Flint, Michigan lead-in-drinking-water crisis, there's been ongoing public concern about -- and attention to -- addressing the threat of lead in drinking water. It's well-proven that lead exposure causes numerous negative health effects, including damage to the nervous system, learning disabilities, and impaired hearing. Lead exposure is unsafe at any level.

Because children spend so much time in school buildings during their prime years of development, lead contamination in school drinking water is particularly dangerous. Recent data shows that 60 percent of all water samples taken from Philadelphia school water outlets had elevated levels of lead.

There is now an opportunity to change course. The recent federal stimulus package signed into law by President Biden offers the chance to help address this threat: this funding package directs \$1.1 billion to the School District of Philadelphia, which can allow the District to address long standing issues that were previously difficult to tackle due to fiscal constraints. With just a small portion of the District's \$1.1 billion allocation, the District has the resources to address this threat districtwide.

Given this, the undersigned groups respectfully call on the School District of Philadelphia to announce a district-wide initiative to ensure safe drinking water for all children in the district to:

1. Allocate \$2-4 million of the District's federal stimulus (ESSER III) funds to replace all remaining drinking water fountains with hydration stations with lead filters by 2024.
2. Reaffirm the District's commitment to at least one working outlet per 100 students for both school capacity and actual enrollment for each school building.
3. Ensure point of use filters certified to remove lead are also installed on any sinks used to prepare food or beverages.
4. Given the scale and scope of this project, we would ask that the District prioritize replacing old fountains with hydration stations in schools with the highest levels of lead contamination.

5. Ensuring that water bottle filling stations installed in a public school buildings:
 - a. Are regularly cleaned to maintain sanitary conditions;
 - b. Are maintained on a regular basis to ensure they function properly;
6. Regularly train staff on how to maintain filtration systems and educate teachers, students, and staff to recognize when a hydration station indicates that the filter needs to be changed.
7. Reaffirm the District's policy to allow and promote having students, teachers, and staff bring and carry approved water bottles into school buildings to utilize hydration stations and promote drinking healthy water.

We look forward to hearing back from you on this important topic, and call on you to take these steps immediately to protect students' health from the threat of lead in drinking water.

Sincerely,

David Masur
PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center

Pastor Willie Francois
Black Church Center for Justice and Equality

Emma Horst-Martz
PennPIRG Education Fund

Jacob Zychick
American Heart Association

Odessa Tate
All In The Family

Clark Dingman
Center City Organized for Responsible Development

Eugene Desyatnik
Bella Vista Neighbors Association

Celeste Hardester
Central Roxborough Civic Association

Staci Harris
Brewerytown Sharswood Community Civic Association

Rev. Chester Williams
Chew & Belfield Neighborhood Club

Yvonne Stephens
Bridesburg Community Action Alliance

Douglas Rucker
Chew and Cheltenham CDC

Mark Harris
Cathedral Park CDC

Colleen McCauley
Children First

Chris Spahr
Centennial Parkside CDC

Ahavia Glaser
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

Larissa Mogano
Cobbs Creek Neighbors

Andre Sawyer
Community 360

Molly Parzen
Conservation Voters of PA

Tracy Carluccio
Delaware Riverkeeper Network

Andre Sawyer
Democratic 4th ward

Morgan Berman
Dickinson Square Civic Association

Victoria Miles-Chambliss
Empowered CDC Inc.

Claire Murphy
Families for Houston

Nichole Girgenti
Friends of Southwark

Debra Stewart
Friends of Nebinger

Elaine Wells
Global Thinking Initiatives Inc

Maria Gonzalez
HACE CDC

Shannon Farrell
Harrowgate Civic Association

Elizabeth Ayala
**Hispanic Community Counseling Services
Administration**

Rachel Mark
**The Health, Education and Legal
Assistance Project: A Medical-Legal
Partnership at Widener University**

Emily Pugliese
Henry H. Houston HSA

Ruth I Birchett
**Heritage Community Development
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Mary Grace Joyce
Mabel Morris Family Home Visit Program

Mary Grace Joyce
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium

Bill McKinney
New Kensington CDC

Lynn Schwartz
Our City, Our Schools

Mary Allen
Overbrook Farms Club

Gregory Allen
Overbrook West Neighbors

Barbara Capozzi
Packer Park Civic

Laurie Mazer
Parents United for Public Education

Drew Murray
Philadelphia Crosstown Coalition

Mary Grace Joyce
Philadelphia Nurse-Family Partnership

Adrian Rivera-Reyes
Philly Boricuas

Hannah Holliday
Philly DSA

Albert Littlepage
Point Breeze CDCoalition

Bishop Dwayne Royster
POWER Interfaith

Adams Rackes
Reclaim Philadelphia

Charles Reeves Jr
Resident Action Committee II

David O'Connel
JeffPay PILOTs

Dr. Carolina Baltazar Edwards
Snyderville Community Development Corporation

Marcus Ferreira
South Street West Business Improvement District, Inc.

Donna Henry
Southwest CDC

Michael Ross
Southwest Philadelphia District Services

Theresa McCormick
The Pinnwheel Group Inc.

Antonio Parretta
Veterans Stadium Neighbors

Vinh Ho
Vietnamese Association For Aging Philadelphia & Suburbs

Lorraine Gomez
Viola Street Residents Association

Mike Tannenbaum
West Cheltenham neighbors

Kyle Sampson
West Philadelphia Economic Development Council

Heather Stanton
West Torresdale/Morrell Park Civic Association

Gertrude Weaver
Words by Weaver

Rapheal Randall
Youth United for Change

Billy Lanzilotti
1st Ward Republicans

Jon Geeting
5th Square

Michael Cibik
5th Ward Republican Committee

Timothy Reimer
27th Ward Republican RCO

El Amor Brawne Ali
37th Democratic Ward Executive Committee

Billy Lanzilotti
39th Ward Republicans

Catherine Blunt
46 Ward Democratic Committee RCO

Timothy Reimer
46th Ward Republicans

Andrew Gentsch
51st Ward Republican RCO

Gary Grisafi
53rd republican ward