

Friday, March 29, 2019

To the Honorable Governor Phil Scott; Secretary Daniel French; Secretary Julie Moore; Commissioner Mark Levine; Speaker of the House Mitzi Johnson; Representative Kate Webb and members of the House Education Committee; Representative Kitty Toll and members of the House Appropriations Committee; Representative Ann Pugh and members of the House Human Services Committee

S.40 - An act relating to testing and remediation of lead in the drinking water of schools and child care facilities

We are writing on behalf of Vermont child care providers, independent schools, public schools, and, most importantly, Vermont's children.

Our shared highest priority is keeping Vermont's children safe.

We support the State of Vermont's initiative to test and remediate drinking water in all child care facilities, independent schools and public schools.

Our collective belief is that to address this very compelling public health issue potentially affecting more than 1,500 entities and nearly one hundred thousand children, the state should establish a program that protects children to the greatest extent possible. **To support the entities being called upon to test and remediate in a timely, effective, and consistent manner, we call upon the State to provide full funding of water sampling costs and 100% of estimated remediation costs under this program for all of Vermont's school facilities and child care facilities.**

Even with full funding of the estimated program costs, responding entities may be faced with unforeseen immediate and future costs. While the program funds the first round of testing and specific forms of remediation, it is silent on who pays the costs of future testing and does not address certain forms of remediation not anticipated by the bill.

In order that this initiative be treated as a program of the highest priority, and in order that it be fully implemented on a reasonable timeline, the State of Vermont should provide full state funding. To do otherwise may perpetuate social inequities and introduce an array of other considerations that will impede timely progress on the initiative and not treat the program as the priority that it is. State funding of this important program is a sound investment in Vermont's future. The direct economic, individual, and societal costs of lead poisoning far outweigh the estimated costs associated with testing and remediation.

Signed,

Let's Grow Kids
Voices for Vermont's Children
Vermont Association of School Business Officials
Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance
Vermont Independent Schools Association
Vermont Principals' Association
Vermont School Boards Association
Vermont Superintendents Association
Conservation Law Foundation