

Dear House Members,

I'm writing this letter to ask that you consider the need to fully fund the program that addresses lead testing & remediation in the drinking water of Schools. There are numerous reasons why the State should fully fund the program and among them are:

- 1) Any unfunded or partially funded program, no matter how worthwhile or purposeful, constitutes an unfunded mandate. With the ongoing pressure on school budgets, the State should refrain from enacting new unfunded mandates.
- 2) South Burlington has an approved school budgets for FY2020, and this budget did not include funds for lead testing or remediation. This means that the expectation would be that remediation would be paid for through funds allocated for other purposes, or that we would need to postpone remediation in order to fund this in the FY2021 budget year.
- 3) This is a program that has been established as a high priority by the State, with a sense of urgency conveyed by the State, and the State should take measures to treat it that way, including funding the program fully and fairly. Once this program gets underway, there will be justifiable pressure from communities to remediate as necessary to address high lead levels. Communities will not want to wait and full funding by the State will assure that monies are available for prompt action.

The Senate version of S40 established an estimated cost of \$2.4 million for testing and remediation (expectation was that school districts would pay 50% of remediation costs).

When the timeline of the program was reviewed for feasibility and the remediation estimates were reviewed by facilities managers, a new estimate showed the predicted costs at \$3.4 million (at an action level of 5ppb or greater). The General Assembly has appropriated \$2.4 million, but the program funding is \$1 million short. **\$3.4 would fund testing and approved remediation at 100%.**

I have attached a copy of a letter sent last Friday by nine organizations requesting full funding for S.40 - the water testing and lead remediation bill. VASBO is one of the nine organizations and of which I am member of.

Thank you for your time,

*Amadee B. Denton
Business Manager
South Burlington School District*

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