

Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
June 14, 2019

## Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers Protecting Against Drinking Water Contaminants

**WHEREAS**, providing clean, safe drinking water to the over 105 million residents in the region's States and Provinces is a shared priority of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers (collectively "the Conference"); and,

**WHEREAS**, contaminants such as lead pose a threat to human health and the environment across the Great Lakes St. Lawrence region; and,

**WHEREAS**, the American Water Works Association indicates more than 6 million complete or partial lead service lines remain in operation in the United States alone, serving 15 million to 22 million people; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Great Lakes region contains the highest concentrations of lead service lines (LSLs) in the United States<sup>1</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the U.S. EPA<sup>2</sup>, LSLs are typically the greatest contributor to the occurrence of lead in drinking water coming from the tap; and

**WHEREAS**, the complete replacement of LSLs is the best approach to eliminating lead in water, and the overall cost nationwide in the United States alone is estimated at US\$30 billion; and,

**WHEREAS**, in the 1970's, about two-thirds of funding for water and wastewater infrastructure in the United States came from the federal government, and only about 9% today – primarily in the form of state revolving loan fund capitalization grants; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Safe Drinking Water Loan program is not enough to meet the demand and some U.S. jurisdictions do not allow user water rates to be used to fund the replacement of the privately-owned portion of LSLs, further complicating funding replacement; and

**WHEREAS**, a comprehensive approach is needed that allows for leveraging a variety of funding sources and flexibility to match the right tool with each project. Certainty and stability in long-term federal resources are critical.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers call on the federal governments of the United States and Canada to provide appropriate resources through programs such as the US Safe Drinking Water Revolving Fund in the United States to support the accelerated replacement of LSLs.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Conference calls for concerned jurisdictions, where relevant, to report out on an all-hazards response – test paint, water, soil, and dust for possible source when blood level is high and include testing the drinking water, which is not currently the case in all areas. Best practices for these investigations should be developed regionally for use by local health departments.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Conference supports plans for funding full LSL replacement and ask the federal governments for increased funding to implement these plans in concerned jurisdictions. Funding mechanisms should benefit consumers served by LSLs in an equitable manner without regard to income, race, or ethnicity; and,

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Conference calls for the sharing between the States of inventories of LSLs and collaboration between States and Provinces to develop regional best practices.

*Adopted by the Governors of the Great Lakes States and the Premiers of Ontario and Québec on this 14th day of June 2019.*

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<sup>1</sup> Vedachalam, S. 2018. Lead in Drinking Water: Post-Flint Media Coverage and Evolving Laws in the Northeast-Midwest Region. Northeast-Midwest Institute Report, 46 pp., p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. EPA, <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water#getinto> (May 28, 2019)