

To: Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy

From: Curt Witynski, J.D., Assistant Director, League of Wisconsin Municipalities

Date: March 8, 2017

Re: SB 48, Allowing Financial Assistance Programs for Replacement of Lead Service Laterals

The League of Wisconsin Municipalities strongly supports SB 48, making it lawful for a municipal water utility to establish a program, pursuant to a municipal ordinance, providing financial assistance to private property owners for the replacement of lead water service lines.

With the national spotlight on Flint, Michigan the last two years, the detrimental long term health impacts of lead in drinking water has become abundantly clear as has the significant cost to replace the nation's aging water infrastructure. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that in Wisconsin at least 176,000 lead service lines connect homes to the municipal water mains. Many cities and villages in Wisconsin are working on replacing their lead water mains. (The back of this memo lists Wisconsin cities with lead water service pipes.)

The Department of Natural Resources strongly recommends that private water service laterals containing lead be replaced at the same time that municipal water utilities replace their lead water mains. Replacement and maintenance of water service laterals are the responsibility of the owners of the property they serve. Generally, property constructed prior to 1952 is connected to the water main by lead service laterals. According to City of Milwaukee staff, the average cost of service lateral replacement is \$3,600 with a range of \$2,000 to \$7,200. Many of the people residing in properties with lead water services are low income and find it difficult to afford the full cost of replacement.

The Wisconsin Public Service Commission interprets current law as disallowing utilities from using rate payer revenue to assist private property owners with the cost of replacing lead service pipes. At the same time, levy limits constrain municipalities from using tax levy to fund a financial assistance program to aid property owners in covering the cost of replacing lead laterals.

SB 48 makes it clear that a municipal water utility, if authorized by the municipal governing body, may establish and fund a financial assistance program to help private property owners finance the replacement of lead service laterals.

We urge the Committee to recommend passage of SB 48. Thanks for considering our comments.

Communities with Lead Services

Municipality	Lead	%	Total
Milwaukee	70,000	43.1%	162,405
Racine	11,603	33.9%	34,237
Kenosha	9,052	30.5%	29,642
Wauwatosa	8,655	51.7%	16,728
Wausau	7,178	45.0%	15,957
West Allis	6,689	34.2%	19,581
Manitowoc	6,570	43.8%	15,002
Beloit	3,210	18.6%	17,296
Whitefish Bay	3,000	61.7%	4,865
Green Bay	2,337	6.6%	35,624
Two Rivers	2,326	44.3%	5,253
South Milwaukee	1,905	32.1%	5,935
Janesville	1,834	9.1%	20,262
Eau Claire	1,431	5.7%	25,087
Neenah	1,364	14.1%	9,658
Cudahy	1,244	22.8%	5,457
Watertown	1,114	14.5%	7,701
Beaver Dam	1,017	17.4%	5,846
Ashland	720	21.5%	3,348
Platteville	645	19.9%	3,238
Monroe	603	12.6%	4,786
Fort Atkinson	307	6.9%	4,435
Appleton	252	0.9%	29,152
Sun Prairie	145	1.7%	8,668
Marshfield	86	1.1%	7,757