



TESTIMONY

Testimony on S988 Senate Education Committee

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Good Afternoon, Committee Chair Senator Gopal, Vice Chair, Senator Turner, and committee members:

My name is Deandrah Cameron, policy manager at New Jersey Future, and I work on lead in drinking water hazards. Thank you for the opportunity to share your testimony today.

New Jersey Future is a nonprofit organization that believes every New Jerseyan deserves to live in a prosperous, fair economy, thriving community, and healthy neighborhood. We promote policies for cost-effective, sustainable water systems in New Jersey and support policies promoting access to clean drinking water. New Jersey Future is committed to identifying and removing sources of lead in drinking water, including the replacement of lead service lines within 8 years, and believes that provision S988 is an effective interim strategy to ensure that vulnerable populations in harm's way have the necessary information to limit and prevent exposure.

This is especially important in the case of indoor lead plumbing that lead service line removal does not directly address.

The provisions of S988 represent significant progress on lead-related exposure transparency and, eventually, intervention for schools and childcare facilities. S988 provides:

- In one year, the Department of Education (DOE) and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) must develop online databases that would accept the lead in drinking water test results and give school districts and childcare facilities (CCFs) 90 days after that to submit their results electronically.
- Requires an easily searchable format on the internet for public usage.
- In two years, each department must report to the Governor and Legislature on the extent of lead in those facilities that need remediation and provide recommendations on how the state may provide assistance.

New Jersey Future supports this legislation, though it proposes an alternative approach to increase efficiency, analytical and reporting capabilities:

- Centralize lead-in drinking water test results from schools and childcare facilities into the existing **systems currently being administered by the Department of Environmental Protection**, which is more experienced in dealing with large blocks of environmental test data and is already a clickable and searchable system.
- A slight amendment to the bill's reporting requirements that a **statewide map of lead testing results is prepared and publicly released, NJDEP has already begun to map lead service line data on the Potential lead exposure mapping map (PLEM)**

Thank you for the opportunity to share our comments on this important matter.