

Protecting Communities from Toxic Plastics during U.S. Lead Pipe Replacement



22 million people are reliant on toxic lead service lines.¹ Thankfully, the federal government recently approved **\$15 billion dollars to replace the lead service lines.**² The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will work with the states to ensure the money is equitably distributed, prioritizing communities with the highest exposure level and environmental justice concerns.

To ensure community health and safety are put first, we have **two urgent recommendations:**

1 Filtered Not Bottled

Impacted communities should be provided with options for filtered water, not plastic bottles.

- Water filters (certified to NSF/ANSI Standard 53) are critical to ensure clean drinking water and reduce lead exposure risk before, during, and up to six months after service line replacement.³
- If filters are not applicable, municipalities should fund other filtered water alternatives such as water buffalos, tanks, and reusable water bottles.
- Single-use plastic water bottles are not the solution for clean drinking water before, during, or after the service line replacements. Single-use plastics are a health threat at every stage of their existence.⁴

2 Plastic-Free Pipes

Lead service lines should be replaced with non-toxic materials, not plastics like PVC.

- Manufacturing of PVC uses highly-toxic mercury, PFAS and asbestos. These are released into the environment and accumulate in our bodies, causing health problems like cancer and lung damage.⁵
- Pipes made of PVC leach endocrine disruptors and can be a source of microplastics in the water.^{6,7} Another kind of common plastic-pipe, known as PEX, also leaches neurotoxins and carcinogens.⁸
- The EPA and States must opt for safe materials for replacement service lines, such as recycled copper, that do not pose health consequences to the impacted community.

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