



TESTIMONY

**Testimony on A2697, A3373, A4121, A4122, A4173  
Assembly Environment & Solid Waste Committee  
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16 W. Lafayette St.  
Trenton, NJ 08608  
p: (609) 393-0008  
f: (609) 360-8478  
w: njfuture.org

**Contact:** Chris Sturm, Managing Director, Policy & Water  
csturm@njfuture.org  
609.393.0008 x114

**New Jersey Future Supports A2697, A3373, A4121, A4122, A4173**

Chairwoman Pinkin and members of the committee,

New Jersey Future, a nonpartisan nonprofit that promotes policies for sustainable growth and development in New Jersey, supports A2697, A3373, A4121, A4122, and A4173. These bills address the issue of lead in drinking water, requiring greater transparency and access to information on current conditions as well as plans and financing to reduce exposure to this toxic chemical. Lead contamination exists throughout the state, but is particularly pervasive in communities with older housing stock that lack the means to upgrade water systems. We all want a healthy New Jersey, whether environmentally or economically, and ensuring access to safe, clean drinking water will help us achieve holistic health.

**A2697 Requires public water systems to compile lead service line inventories.**

New Jersey's drinking water is contaminated as it makes its way through older pipes and plumbing fixtures and fitting, but the extent of the problem has not yet been realized or documented. These inventories are necessary for residents to make informed decisions and for local governments and water purveyors to assess the cost and plan for upgrades. Other states and cities are already compiling lead service line inventories and can serve as a valuable source for best practices when New Jersey embarks on this process.

**A3373 Requires DEP to adopt Statewide plan to reduce lead exposure from contaminated soil and drinking water.**

Understanding opportunities for lead exposure is an important first step to correcting this issue, and we are also encouraged by the prospect of empowering the Administration to take the necessary subsequent steps to put us on a path to safe drinking water. We would like to see strong stakeholder engagement during this process to take advantage of the knowledge and expertise so many organizations and institutions have to offer.

**A4121 Requires DOE and DCF to establish online reporting system for schools and child care centers to report lead testing results.**

Our young children are most at risk of experiencing negative effects of lead exposure, and spend many of their waking hours in child care or school facilities. This sort of transparency and accountability will help ensure that our children's water is safe. For more information, please refer to the attached report on lead in school drinking water.

**A4122 Concerns disclosure of homeowner lead plumbing prior to home sale.**

Every resident should know if their home is a healthy place to live, including whether the water is safe to drink. We have learned from our partners at Isles that there are opportunities to coordinate this bill with other initiatives to ensure a holistic solution.

**A4173 Makes various changes to New Jersey Infrastructure Bank's enabling act.**

The upgrades required to ensure safe drinking water are expensive, and many municipalities lack access to affordable financing to complete these projects, so it is particularly important that this act is amended to allow for financing of lead service line replacement on private property as well as reservoir repair. Combined sewer systems prone to overflowing and discharging untreated stormwater runoff into our water face the same challenges. When combined sewer systems overflow, raw sewage contaminates our water which floods our roads and basements. Access to longer-term financing will allow municipalities to address this serious problem.

Thank you for recognizing the importance of protecting the health of our residents and state by addressing the vital issue of clean drinking water. When it comes to the health of our children and residents, we must take the time to make sure that we are getting this right. New Jersey Future and our partners would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the foregoing recommendations and are happy to work with you on this and other critical legislation.