



TESTIMONY

Testimony on S829 Senate Community & Urban Affairs Committee

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Dear Senator Singleton and members of the Committee,

New Jersey Future is a nonprofit organization that believes New Jersey can be a great place to live with a prosperous, fair economy; thriving communities; and a healthy environment if smart decisions are made about what and where to build and the supporting infrastructure. That's why we promote policies for cost-effective, sustainable water systems in New Jersey. Everyone in New Jersey should have access to safe, clean drinking water, and the provisions of S829 represent an important step forward in the area of lead-related disclosure. While it will take several years to properly identify and remove sources of lead in drinking water, such as lead service lines, one of the most effective interim strategies is to ensure that residents who are in harm's way have the best information possible about the condition of the housing in which they live.

While New Jersey Future supports this legislation, one amendment is recommended. As presently drafted, the bill would change the existing property condition disclosure statement that is provided by the seller of property to include a question specifically addressing whether the building is served by "lead plumbing." Since the source of lead in drinking water may be either a lead service line, which is estimated to be responsible for up to 75% of the exposure to lead in drinking water, or indoor lead plumbing (e.g., lead solder, lead faucets and fixtures), the bill should expressly require that the question added to the disclosure statement clearly and separately identify both types of sources.

The lead and copper rule amendments recently promulgated by the Environmental Protection Agency require water systems to notify property owners if their property is served by a lead service line or a line whose composition is unknown. This represents an important step forward that will directly assist in the implementation of S829. In addition, a check for visible, indoor lead plumbing should be required as part of the normal home inspection process that precedes real estate sales.

This suggested amendment will ensure that the disclosure process is truly comprehensive and avoid misunderstandings, both of which are key to protecting the public health.

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