



UTAH LEAD COALITION

Every Child Tested, Every Future Secured

Dear Representative Stratton,

We as members of the Utah Lead Coalition (ULC) would like to speak vehemently in support of **House Bill 88 School and Child Care Water Testing Requirements** sponsored by Representative Handy. The ULC formed in 2016 as a group of public and private partners working to increase awareness about the hazards of lead and to promote testing in children and pregnant women. In 2018, only 3.6% of Utah children 5 years and younger were tested for lead poisoning and of those tested, almost 2% had elevated levels in their blood. There is no safe level of lead and even small amounts in the young child can slow down growth and development, damage hearing and lead to ADHD, aggression, learning disabilities, and other behavioral disorders. As we have learned from the Washington DC, Flint, Newark water crises and even our own Sandy water event last February, lead exposure from drinking water is a threat.

Currently there is no requirement that Utah schools have their water tested for lead, but in 24 states and the District of Columbia they do. These states have set their own thresholds for action as the EPA considers a national standard in its revised Lead and Copper Rule.

House Bill 88 comes at an opportune time. The state DEQ-Division of Drinking water has received a \$480,000 EPA grant to implement such testing and a renewal grant to continue the effort is in process. Based on a 2017 pilot study of school water sampling in Utah, it is estimated that 4% of school samples would be above the 10 µg/L level, the standard set to require action from this bill. An estimated 2000 taps could be affected representing exposure for 22,000 children.

House Bill 88 has no associated appropriations and the basic components are:

- To sample every 5 years all consumable taps in schools (preschool through high school, public and private) and every center-based childcare facility (as defined by the DOH)
- The first round of sampling would be completed by the end of school year 2023
- Samples must be collected according to state guidelines (which will be provided) and analyzed by a certified laboratory.
- Mitigate any tap that sampled higher than 10 µg/L
- Resample every 5 years (i.e. either all at once or on a rotating schedule)
- Maintain records of the sample results and actions taken for at least 5 years and make them available to the public either at the facility or online

Fully eliminating lead from plumbing materials is the only way to guarantee nobody will drink lead-tainted water. But until the time all old plumbing has been replaced, we need to ensure the safety of our children in schools, a place where they spend a large part of their lives. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Claudia Fruin, MD, FAAP chair/founder of ULC

Liz Harris, MD, FAAP Intermountain Health Lead Champion, member ULC

Jonny Vasic, executive director Utah Physicians for Healthy Environment, Member ULC