



## MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

### *Testing Water for Lead in Schools*

S.2122A – Rivera

A.160B – Gottfried

**An Act** to amend the public health law, in relation to school potable water testing

#### **Justification**

The American Academy of Pediatrics, World Health Organization, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention agree that there is no safe level of lead. Children are especially susceptible to the negative effects of lead contamination. Lead exposure can cause a number of health effects in children including reduced cognitive function, learning disabilities, and aggressive behavior.

In 2016, data from New York's first round of lead testing revealed that more than 82% of public schools reported at least one drinking water tap that exceeded the State's current action level of 0.015 milligrams per liter. Washington, DC, Illinois, and Vermont lead action levels are 0.004 or 0.005, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 0.001. New York's current action level is far higher than the best science recommends and puts New York children at an unacceptable risk of lead exposure.

Currently, schools who meet the federal definition of "lead free" (pipes containing less than 0.25% of lead) are exempt from testing. However, this "lead free" determination is not sufficient in ensuring that children are not being needlessly exposed to high levels of lead. This legislation would remove this injurious exemption and protect all New York's school children.

This bill would require water testing in schools every three years, remove testing exemptions, set the lead action level at 5ppb, increase disclosure of testing results, and specifies that safe drinking water will be provided for free to school occupants when outlets are taken out of service for remediation. This legislation is critical to protect the drinking water and health of children in New York State.

**CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS  
S.2122A/A.160B – TESTING WATER FOR LEAD IN SCHOOLS**

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*CCE is an 120,000-member non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to empower communities and advocate solutions that protect public health and the natural environment.*

May 28, 2021