

Durbin, Cardin introduce 'clear act' to ensure safer drinking water for American communities

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New legislation directs EPA to improve reporting, testing and monitoring of copper and lead levels in drinking water

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Ben Cardin (D-MD) today introduced new legislation, the *Copper and Lead Evaluation, Assessment and Reporting Act of 2016* (CLEAR Act), to better protect the American public from being poisoned by its drinking water supplies.

The CLEAR Act directs the Environmental Protection Agency to develop new ways to improve the reporting, testing and monitoring of lead and copper levels in America's drinking water, addressing an urgent need brought to light in Flint, Mich., that exists in communities nationwide.

“A recent Chicago Tribune report highlighted the risks that aging water infrastructure can pose to residents of cities like Chicago where nearly 80% of homes are connected to pipes that contain lead,” said Durbin. “The crisis in Flint has brought national attention to the threat of elevated levels of lead in drinking water and the danger that can be to children and families if left untreated. The CLEAR Act focuses on common sense reforms to give Americans more information about the safety of their drinking water.”

“The loss of safe drinking water supplies in Flint and in communities across the country has given rise to a crisis of public confidence that should never be allowed to exist in America,” said Senator Cardin, a senior member of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. “The CLEAR Act will work to restore the public trust in its drinking water by improving safety testing and ensuring our communities know immediately should their drinking water safety ever be compromised.”

By codifying into law the December 2015 [recommendations](#) of the National Drinking Water Advisory Council for long-term revisions to EPA standards for lead and copper, the CLEAR Act acts on broadly backed, consensus recommendations for reform. These include:

- Establishing a health-based, household action level that triggers a report to the consumer and to the applicable health agency for follow-up.
- Adding targeted outreach to consumers with lead service lines and other vulnerable populations and their caregivers/healthcare providers.
- Encouraging public accountability through better online reporting from utilities to the public.
- Requiring public water systems to provide a public statement of lead service line ownership where a community has lead service lines.
- Modifying monitoring requirements to provide for voluntary, consumer-requested tap samples for lead.

- Utilizing results of tap samples for lead to inform consumer action to reduce the risks in their homes. Informing the appropriate health agency when results are above a designated household action level.
- Assessing the effectiveness of corrosion control treatment or other reasons for elevated lead results.

“Healthy water is one of the most basic human needs, and guaranteeing safe public drinking water is one of the most basic responsibilities of our government,” Senator Cardin added. “The American people need to be able to trust that their drinking water is being managed and monitored to the best of our abilities and in the most transparent manner possible. The CLEAR Act will move us decisively toward these goals.”

“No one in America should be without access to safe drinking water. But when that safety is threatened, the challenge can often be identifying the impacted areas and immediately informing residents,” said Durbin. “The CLEAR Act should help make that process easier.”