***For Immediate Release - 10:00 a.m. EDT, June 22, 2016***

**Lead-in-Water is Pervasive at DC Schools, Rec Centers, Day Care Facilities & Library Taps**

**Public Seeks Law Guided by Science Not PR Sound Bites.**

DC Schools and other DC institutions are riddled with lead pipes, lead bearing plumbing, and water coolers that contribute lead to the water used for drinking and cooked meals by our kids.

Yet DC Agencies let a 2007 voluntary agreement between advocates and DCPS, DGS & DOEE fall by the wayside, leaving DC’s most vulnerable exposed to a dangerous toxin.

Parents and advocates demand transparent, accountable enforceable law that is guided by science not soundbites that focuses on filtration first and then, over time, replacing lead-bearing pipes and plumbing.

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WASHINGTON, DC (June 22, 2016) –DC parents and the Campaign for Lead Free Water questioned the adequacy of the plan unveiled by the OCA, DEM, DCPS, DGS and DOEE to protect children in schools, day care facilities, recreation centers and libraries. Parents and advocates pointed out that the DC Government’s proposed program is based on faulty knowledge of the science and public health issues arising from the complexities associated with lead-in-water.

Our DC schools should be a safe zone,” said Lead Free Water’s Satu Hasse-Webb, a parent of a child who until recently went to Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan. “My family has been threatened with lead since we found out that our residential tap water tested over 300 ppb in 2004. Now in 2016 and here we go again. This is déjà vu all over again. When will we ever learn?”

DC has a history of re-discovering our schools’ lead-in-water problem going back to the mid-eighties according to Parents for Nontoxic Alternatives’ Dr. Yanna Lambrinidou, who authored a 2010 scholarly article about the issue of lead-in-water in schools across the US. “We have amnesia in DC,” notes Dr. Lambrinidou, “each time we learn again about the problem, DCPS, DGS and DOEE pretend the issue is new.”

In 2007, Ralph Scott, Dr. Lambrinidou and Paul Schwartz reached a voluntary testing, notification, filtering and remediation accord with DCPS, DGS and DOEE. “The voluntary agreement we secured with this troika of DC city entities fell apart when we took our eyes off the ball,” remarked Lambrinidou, “We need to move forward with an enforceable law that puts the science of how lead-in-water really works, at the center of our solution.

The coalition of DC parents and advocates demanded a two track solution:

* Filter First – assume, as the science tells us, that the variability of how lead-in-water expresses itself in water makes it widely available at taps used for drinking and cooking.
* Get the lead out from the pipes and plumbing over time.

The coalition urged the City Council to pass a law that is based on transparency and accountability while requiring the DC government to hire staff who know the particulars of the science, policies, best practices and history of lead-in-water in DC and in DC schools, rec centers, day care facilities and libraries.

“Currently, DC Government is making up policy as it goes along, behind closed doors, with no one who has expertise on the science of lead-in-water,” explained Campaign for Lead Free Water’s Paul Schwartz, “This is not acceptable 12 years after the District had the biggest lead-in-water crisis in the nation and it must be rectified.”

**KEY POINTS:**

* **There is no “safe” level of lead in water**
* **Water tests are not a reliable measure to ascertain lead levels in water**
* **DCPS (and other agencies) must filter all water that children could ingest (drinking or cooking).**
* **Children should be tested for lead in their blood at the moment any water source at a DC public school tests high for lead – not many months later.**
* **Water filters should be installed in** all **DCPS schools not just some**
* **Flushing the pipes in the morning before school starts does not remedy the problem**

**FURTHER READING:**

Lambrinidou, Yanna, Simoni Triantafyllidou, and Marc Edwards. “Failing Our Children: Lead in U.S. School Drinking Water.” *New Solutions: Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy* 20 (2010): 25-47.

Edwards, Marc, Simoni Triantafyllidou, and Dana Best. “Elevated Blood Lead in Young Children Due to Lead-Contaminated Drinking Water: Washington, DC, 2001-2004.” *Environmental Science & Technology* 43 (2009): 1618-23.

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