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Education Interim Committee

67th Montana Legislature

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June 29, 2022

Rep. Sue Vinton, commission presiding officer
ARPA Infrastructure Advisory Commission
Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
P.O. Box 201601
Helena, MT 59620-1601

Dear Rep. Vinton and members of the ARPA Infrastructure Advisory Commission,

The Education Interim Committee respectfully requests the ARPA Infrastructure Advisory Commission examine using federally designated funds to correct high lead levels in school water fixtures and systems, which can cause myriad grave health problems in children. This is a serious problem.

The Department of Environmental Quality reported at our committee's June 14 meeting that Montana still has 200 schools of our 593 that need to test and that most of those schools that have tested need to remediate either individual water fixtures or components of the plumbing system itself. This is a widespread problem.

The Education Interim Committee recognizes the ARPA Infrastructure Advisory Commission is weighing numerous infrastructure priorities but asks that you consider children to be the most important investment we make in the future. The committee also recognizes that various federal funding streams *may* be available to *many* school districts as they undertake remediation efforts but ask that the ARPA Infrastructure Advisory Commission look at the availability and sufficiency of those funding streams; there are likely some school districts to which your commission can target desperately needed funds.

The ARPA Infrastructure Advisory Commission can be part of addressing this serious and widespread problem. Thank you to the commission for considering this request as you continue your important work.

Sincerely,

Sen. Edie McClafferty, Chair
Rep. Fred Anderson, Vice Chair