



Water Policy Interim Committee

67th Montana Legislature

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May 23, 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,

The Water Policy Interim Committee respectfully requests the ARPA Infrastructure Advisory Commission recommend using the federally designated funds to correct high lead levels in school water.

The committee recognizes that exposure to lead can harm children, by damaging the brain and nervous system, slowing growth and development, and causing learning, behavior, hearing and speech problems. The committee also understands that recent testing of water fixtures at Montana schools has revealed that 7 percent of fixtures need immediate replacement. Hundreds of others require corrective action.

The committee believes that replacing those water fixtures is necessary to protect the health of Montana's children—and the ARPA funds may provide a unique, timely opportunity to do so. Assuming federal guidance allows, the committee also encourages that ARPA infrastructure funds reimburse those schools who proactively sampled their schools' water, began immediate remediation, and already spent district money.

Thank you to the commission, as you continue your important work.

Sincerely,

Sen. Jeffrey Welborn, presiding officer
Water Policy Interim Committee