



**For Immediate Release**  
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## ***Proposed Lead/Copper rules will impact costs, ratepayers***

Reducing or eliminating lead in Michigan drinking water is an important public health goal that water industry professionals support. However, that goal must be balanced with other needed infrastructure improvements, costs and affordability, says the Michigan Section of American Water Works Association (MI-AWWA).

“While MI-AWWA supports ‘getting the lead out’ and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality’s rulemaking process on lead levels,” says **Brian Steglitz**, MI-AWWA communication council chair, “we are concerned about the costs and affordability of proposed state requirements and the potential impact on utility capital improvement programs. Requirements could result in utilities postponing other needed infrastructure improvements to fund this mandate.”

One proposal would reduce lead “action levels” from 15 parts per billion (ppb) to 10 ppb.

“Although the lead action level is not a health-based standard,” explains Steglitz, “MI-AWWA is not opposed to a meaningful reduction in the limit, provided it is based on the best available science. The action level is designed to evaluate whether a water system needs corrosion control treatment to prevent lead and other metals from leaching into tap water.”

MI-AWWA is participating in stakeholder meetings to help revamp the current rules for drinking water and has hosted its own forum for members to review the proposed language.

“Our members pride themselves on the role they play in providing clean, safe drinking water and protecting public health and welfare,” says Steglitz. “We support the state’s broad goal of ensuring the water delivered by Michigan water systems is free of dangerous levels of lead, copper and other contaminants. Our hope is that the state’s new lead and copper rule will allow water systems to cost-effectively provide the safest water possible.”

In recent forums and public meetings, water professionals have explained how the mandate would increase costs and ultimately result in higher bills for water system customers.

Under the proposed rule, even if water samples reveal no major lead issues, municipalities would have to pick up the tab for replacing lead service lines that connect a house to a public water main – costs traditionally borne by property owners.

“MI-AWWA appreciates the inclusive process initiated by the governor’s office and the MDEQ,” says Steglitz. “We will continue to participate in rulemaking and stakeholder meetings in order to represent our members’ interests and support our common goal of providing safe and affordable drinking water to our customers.”

Michigan Section of American Water Works Association is a vital community of nearly 1,500 water professionals in Michigan leading the advancement of water knowledge and improving the value and quality of water in our lives. AWWA is the largest nonprofit, scientific and educational association dedicated to managing and treating water, the world’s most important resource.

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