



Rachel M. Miller
Council President
Councilor – Ward 13

April 22, 2025

Representative Stephen M. Casey, Chair
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street Providence, RI 02903

Dear Honorable Chairman Casey and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 5375, which would grant municipalities the ability to pass stronger ordinances to more effectively replace lead service lines.

The harmful effects of lead exposure are well-documented, and state legislation over the past 20 years, including the recently implemented rental registry, has aimed to eliminate lead exposure. However, the City of Providence still has a disproportionate number of lead service lines, putting our residents, particularly people of color, renters, and low-income individuals, at greater risk compared to the rest of the state.

This bill will empower Providence to codify public health protections into local ordinances by allowing the municipality and Providence Water to replace lead service lines in eligible homes that qualify for a free replacement and have received prior notice, regardless of the property owner's consent. Granting this authority is crucial for accelerating the replacement of lead service lines. It is particularly beneficial for children, who have no control over whether their household's lead service line is replaced, and for low-income families, by proactively replacing lead service lines at no cost.

Additionally, this bill enables renters to request a lead service line replacement if their property owner is unresponsive to such requests. In a city where over 60% of our residents are renters, this provision would allow tenants to be proactive in protecting their own health. Giving renters the ability to bypass an unresponsive landlord is a powerful tool that ensures they are not excluded from the benefits of lead service line replacements.

Overall, this bill grants important powers to the City of Providence to take stronger action on lead service line replacement and prevent households from, intentionally or unintentionally, neglecting to follow public health orders.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rachel M. Miller
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Providence City Council

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