

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

May 9, 2024

The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
Chair  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior,  
Environment & Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior,  
Environment & Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Merkley and Ranking Member Murkowski,

As you draft the Interior-Environment Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2025, we write to urge you to include robust funding for the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) lead based paint abatement, inspection, and enforcement programs.

Blood lead levels have declined by more than 90% since the mid-1970's – easily one of the great public health achievements in recent history. EPA, along with federal and state partners had worked together to drastically reduce or eliminate the use of lead in paint, gasoline, plumbing pipes, food cans, and a variety of other products to put us on a path towards minimizing human exposure.

However, despite a decline in overall exposure, lead poisoning continues to be a problem in places with older homes and buildings. Lead-based paint chips and flakes off, contaminating dust and entering the populace through touch and inhalation, and is the most common source of childhood lead exposure. In both adults and children, lead poisoning decreases performance of the nervous system. At high levels of exposure, lead can severely damage the brain and kidneys and ultimately cause death. For pregnant women, lead may cause miscarriage. Lead is also especially dangerous for children under six years old, as exposure can reduce IQ, cause learning disabilities, and create behavioral problems.

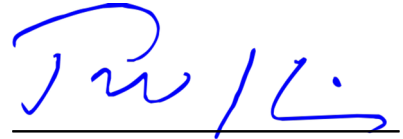
Fortunately, lead poisoning is preventable. Federal law requires certification for all firms (or sole proprietorships) that provide renovation, repair, and painting services which disturbs lead based paint in housing and facilities built prior to 1978 and where children are routinely present. EPA works in cooperation with states, tribes, and territories to ensure firms are certified and use lead-safe work practices. In December 2023, EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance announced over 107 federal enforcement actions of EPA's lead-based paint regulations were completed over Fiscal Year 2023 that held renovation contractors, landlords, and property managers accountable for protecting communities from exposure to lead. Additionally, EPA uses its program funding to clean up lead contaminated waste sites to minimize exposure in surrounding areas.

We thank you in advance for your careful consideration and hope you will ensure that keeping our communities safe from lead continues to be a priority of the federal government by funding these critical EPA programs.

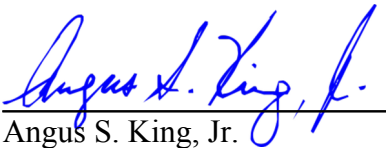
Sincerely,



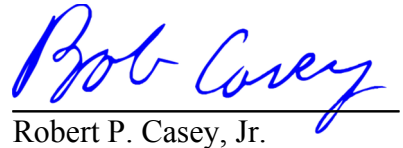
Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



Tina Smith  
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



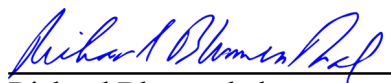
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Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



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Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



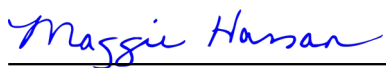
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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



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Jack Reed  
United States Senator



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Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



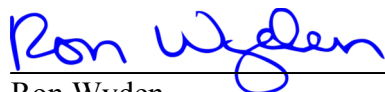
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Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



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Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



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Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator