

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 22, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment & Related Agencies
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment & Related Agencies
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

As you draft the Interior-Environment Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2020, 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 aging water supplies. The proposed cuts to EPA's budget will affect their ability to reduce risk to lead and minimize human exposure and keep lead contamination out of these communities.

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 that certification is required 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 October 2017, EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance announced more than 100 federal enforcement actions of EPA's lead based paint regulations completed over the last year 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.

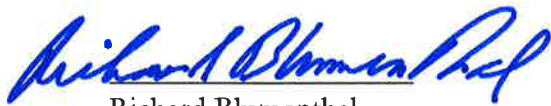
Sincerely,



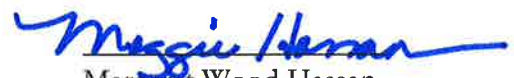
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



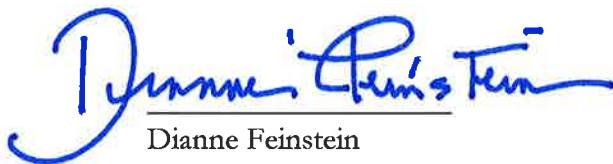
Tina Smith
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
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Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



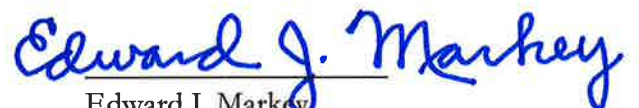
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



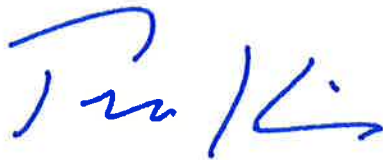
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



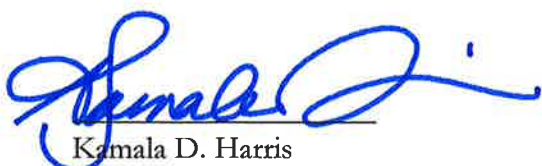
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Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



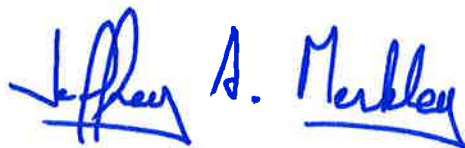
Kamala D. Harris
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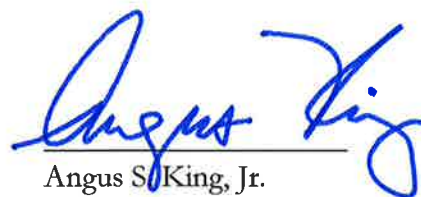
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United States Senator



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United States Senator



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United States Senator



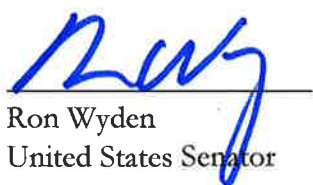
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Cory A. Booker
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Benjamin L. Cardin
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Ron Wyden
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