COALITION OF GREATER MN CITIES

DEDICATED TO A STRONG GREATER MINNESOTA

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Bonding Leaders, Greater Minnesota Leaders, Trade Representatives Call for State Investment in Lead Line Replacement Programs

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Legislative and construction trade leaders joined the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC) on May 6 to call on their colleagues and Governor Tim Walz to pass a substantial bonding bill that invests in lead drinking water line replacement programs. As the Legislature approaches the end of the 2026 session, current funding for lead line replacement programs will run out in 2027, with thousands of Minnesotans at continued risk of lead poisoning from their drinking water infrastructure.

"Minnesota needs at least $150 million to stay on track for the 2037 federal EPA deadline to replace lead service lines. Many communities with shovel-ready projects did not receive the funds they need, and demand continues to grow," said CGMC Executive Director Bradley Peterson. **"Minnesota has an estimated minimum of 100,000 lead service lines. This is a statewide problem. Cities across Greater Minnesota, including Brainerd, Winona, Moorhead, and Duluth, have identified lines needing replacement. There is no time to waste."**

"The funding cliff Minnesota faces is one of a thousand reasons to pass the $1.4 billion bonding bill I have been calling for this year," said Senate Capital Investment Chair Senator Sandy Pappas (DFL-St. Paul). **"With $7 billion in requests from local governments, state agencies and state colleges and universities, we must act decisively to maintain the infrastructure that keeps Minnesota running. That includes dollars to eliminate lead lines' threat to public health. Our work is not done until there are no more lead drinking water lines in the state of Minnesota."**

“Funding for lead pipe replacement is at risk after 2026, and with it, thousands of family-sustaining careers across this state," said Joel Smith, president and business manager of LIUNA Minnesota and North Dakota. **"We are asking lawmakers to pass an infrastructure jobs bill and keep Minnesota moving forward."**

“We bond because it’s our responsibility to take care of public assets, water projects, local roads and bridges, and state-owned properties,” said House Capital Investment Co-Chair Representative Mary Franson (R-Alexandria). **“This is a basic function of state government.”**

“No matter the zip code, every corner of the state benefits from investing in lead service line replacement,” said House Capital Investment Co-Chair Representative Fue Lee (DFL - Minneapolis). **“It’s going to take all levels of government working together to build a lead-free Minnesota, and passing a robust Capital Investment Bill this year is a huge part of that. We’re running out of time, but there’s more than enough time to get this done if we make this a priority.”**

“Over the past four years, Saint Paul Regional Water Services has made significant progress scaling up our lead service line replacement program,” said Racquel Vaske, General Manager of Saint Paul Regional Water Services. **“We’ve built strong partnerships with local contractors, invested in local workforce development, and reached a level of efficiency that allows us to deliver this work effectively and at scale. Maintaining consistent funding is critical—any disruption risks losing that momentum, increasing costs, and delaying the health protections our communities are counting on.”**

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The Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization representing cities outside of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The Coalition educates legislators about issues important to Greater Minnesota. Visit the CGMC at greatermncities.org and follow us on X @greatermncities.