



Proponent Testimony on HB 307, the Lead Line Replacement Act

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Wednesday, October 1st, 2025

Chair Hoops, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Brownlee, and members of the Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 307, the Lead Line Replacement Act.

My name is Annalisa Rocca, and I am the Central Ohio Regional Director for the Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund. The vision of the OEC Action Fund is for a clean, healthy Ohio where our democracy empowers all communities to thrive in harmony with the environment.

Too many Ohio families still face the hidden danger of lead poisoning, unknowingly drinking tap water that may be contaminated by aging lead service lines. Ohio ranks 3rd in the nation for the most lead service lines, with about 745,000 statewide. Nearly 4,000 children each year test positive for elevated blood lead levels in Ohio, and the real number is likely higher because not every child is tested. Here's why that matters: health experts agree that there is no safe level of lead in the blood. For children, and especially kids under the age of six, elevated levels of lead in their blood can cause impaired brain development and lower intelligence. Adults are more likely to experience increased risks of

cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and kidney and nervous system problems when exposed to lead.

We are thrilled to have strong bipartisan support to address this crisis once and for all.

House Bill 307, sponsored by Representatives Robb-Blasdel and Jarrells, prohibits partial replacements of lead lines, which can spike lead levels at the tap, requires robust service-line inventories, and ensures utilities provide certified filters and education before, during, and after replacements. The legislation also includes practical measures to support water systems, such as the ability to spread the cost of lead service line replacement across the rate base, and creating a training and certification program to build the skilled workforce.

This legislation positions Ohio to meet and leverage the U.S. EPA's Lead and Copper Rule Improvements, which require water systems nationwide to identify and replace lead service lines within 10 years.

Replacing these lines will be expensive, it is estimated to cost around \$5 billion. Yet, the cost of inaction is far higher. A recent cost benefit analysis completed by Scioto Analysis, shows that fully replacing Ohio's lead lines is an incredibly strong investment. Every single dollar spent to replace these lead lines will return between \$32 to \$45 in public-health and economic benefit. Over the 15-year project timeline, the replacement program would grow Ohio's economy by \$145 to \$185 billion. Those benefits come from fewer infant and cardiovascular deaths, higher lifetime earnings from avoided IQ loss, reduced special-education and healthcare costs, and less water loss from leaky old pipes. This legislation

isn't just an investment in the health of our communities; it is an investment in our economy and our future.

HB 307 is bipartisan, practical legislation. It protects kids, saves money in the long-term, creates jobs, and aligns Ohio with federal requirements. Most importantly, it creates a plan to get the lead out.

I urge every member of this committee to support HB 307. Thank you for your time, and I'm happy to answer any questions.