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NJ Bill Authorizing Assessments, Bonds to Fund Replacement of Lead-Contaminated Water Lines Signed into Law.

(TRENTON) - Legislation sponsored by Assembly Democrats Eliana Pintor Marin, Cleopatra Tucker and Wayne DeAngelo authorizing municipalities to levy special assessments, and issue bonds, to replace certain lead-contaminated water service lines, has been signed into law.

“This law will put us one step closer to ensuring that our drinking water is safer to drink and lead free,” said Pintor Marin (D-Essex). “In Newark alone, there are approximately 15,000 homes in which the water service lines connecting the property to the city’s main water line are lead. This can lead to contaminated home drinking water.”

“The impact of lead in plumbing systems can have adverse effects on public health,” said Tucker (D-Essex). “This law will move us in the right direction by improving these plumbing systems, providing cleaner drinking water and producing better health outcomes.”

“Clean drinking water is essential,” said DeAngelo (D-Mercer/Middlesex). “This will help municipalities finance projects that will help replace lead-contaminated pipes to ensure the quality and safety of our drinking water.”

Under current law (R.S.40:56-1), if a municipality engages in a project that is categorized as a “local improvement,” the municipality may assess the cost of the project on local property owners in the vicinity who benefit from the project. The law (A-4120) signed today by Gov. Murphy adjusts language in R.S.40:56-1 to ensure that the replacement of certain lead-contaminated home service connections fall within this category, allowing those projects to be assessed as local improvements.

The law also amends a section of the local bond law to allow municipalities and counties to issue 30-year bonds to fund the replacement of lead-contaminated house connections to publicly-owned water systems. Specifically, these bonds will fund replacement of lead-contaminated house connections from the distribution main onto privately-owned real property, and into the privately-owned structure.

The law also amends the County and Municipal Water Supply Act, and the municipal and county utilities authorities law to provide that the public entities operating under those laws are not prevented from undertaking projects to replace lead-contaminated service connections, regardless of possible private service connection ownership.

The provisions of this law will only apply to service line replacement projects that are: (1) undertaken as environmental infrastructure projects; and (2) funded either by loans from the New Jersey Infrastructure Bank, or by loans issued through the Department of Environmental Protection.

By NJ ASSEMBLY DEMOCRATS

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