



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

SERINO FIGHTS TO ENSURE SAFE DRINKING WATER IN SCHOOLS

SUSAN SERINO June 16, 2016

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ALBANY, NY—Senator Sue Serino (R, C, I—Hyde Park) announced today that a bill she co-sponsors to ensure the safety of drinking water in schools passed in the Senate and is poised to pass in the Assembly before the end of this legislative session.

“The health and safety of our children needs to be our highest priority always,” said Senator Serino. “The flood of recent stories exposing the devastating effects of contamination that’s

permeated public water sources across the country requires that we remain vigilant. Because our children spend countless hours in school, we have an express responsibility to ensure that the water in our schools is safe and free of lead contamination.”

As noted in the bill’s justification, children are especially vulnerable to lead poisoning, as their bodies absorb the toxin faster than an adult’s body would. High levels of lead in the blood are especially damaging to young children as it can cause brain damage and have a direct impact on a child’s ability to learn.

Currently, federal rules providing guidelines for the testing of water for lead contamination are not mandatory for schools. This has led to incidents of lead contamination found within schools in the state.

This bill will ensure that regular testing is completed so that parents, teachers and students can rest assured that the water they rely on throughout the day is safe and free of contamination. To fund the regular testing, the bill allows for the use of school building aid apportionments and schools with water containing unacceptable amounts of lead would be eligible for additional financial assistance when considered a construction emergency project so as not to burden cash-strapped school districts.

Buildings built after 2014 will be exempt from the testing and those schools testing negative would be granted waivers.

The Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie has signaled that the bill will now pass in the Assembly.