



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Statement by Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. on Legislation Requiring Lead Testing of School Water in New York State

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR. June 21, 2016

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Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., who serves on both the Senate Education and Senate Environmental Conservation committees, made the following statement on legislation (S.8158) approved by the Senate and Assembly to require periodic lead testing in school water supplies throughout New York:

“It is a victory for students, educators and families throughout New York that our state will soon take extra precautions to test school water supplies for dangerous levels of lead that can poison our children and cause a wide range of physical and neurological problems. With this initiative, New York will become the first state in the nation to adopt such stringent practices and standards to keep our schools and children safe from lead contamination.

“The State Department of Health and State Department of Education will develop regulations for testing and determining acceptable levels of lead in drinking water, and the state will also provide resources for schools to help them afford the testing and any other equipment they might require, such as filters, to remediate any problems found. State agencies will coordinate with local county health departments on the issue, and results of testing will be provided to the public. When lead contamination is discovered, school districts will be required to provide alternative sources of clean drinking water until the problem is

eliminated.

“While most schools that rely upon municipal water do not face contamination issues from the water supplies themselves, there is a growing body of evidence demonstrating that lead builds up in old sinks, water pipes and fountains, and can then leach into drinking water in the buildings. We don’t want Flint, Michigan to happen here, and we have already seen some schools in upstate New York face elevated levels of lead. This legislation will build upon federal rules already in place that govern lead levels in drinking water, and will help to protect our children, who are most susceptible to this toxin, from preventable brain damage and other disorders that can result from exposure to this dangerous heavy metal.

“I look forward to Governor Cuomo signing this important public health and safety legislation into law, and I was proud to vote in favor of it.”