SB 452: Protecting Drinking Water in Schools and Child Care Facilities

The Problem:

- Children in New Hampshire are exposed to lead in drinking water in schools and child care facilities.
- No amount of lead is safe for a child to ingest. Even small amounts of lead can result in permanent irreversible harm – including loss of cognitive ability and behavioral problems.
- Because there is no such thing as safe levels of lead exposure, the CDC recommends that all sources of lead exposure for children be controlled or eliminated.
- The best way to protect children is to prevent lead exposure in the first place.
- The EPA estimates that drinking water can contribute up to 20 percent or more of a person's total exposure to lead.
- As a result of SB 247 (enacted in 2018), New Hampshire schools and child care facilities must test their drinking water for lead.
- Results reported to the Department of Environmental Services reveal widespread lead contamination in schools throughout the state.
- With over 90% of schools reporting lead testing results, 40% detected lead in drinking water:
    - 25% of results revealed lead between 1 – 5 parts per billion ("ppb").
    - 10% of results revealed lead between 5 – 15 ppb.
    - 5% of results revealed lead over 15 ppb.
- Compounding the problem, under current NH law schools and child care facilities are only required to remediate lead in drinking water when it exceeds a federal standard of 15 ppb.
- Importantly, **the federal 15 ppb standard is not a health-based standard**. It comes from EPA's Lead and Copper Rule, which controls for corrosivity in water systems. EPA's health-based recommendation (its Maximum Contaminant Level Goal) for lead in drinking water is **zero**.
- **The American Academy of Pediatrics' health-based recommendation is for no more than 1 ppb of lead in school drinking water**.

The Solution:

SB 452 solves this problem – removing lead from school and child care facility drinking water – by establishing a <u>health based limit of 1 ppb lead</u> in drinking water.