



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Boston Water and Sewer Commission Selected as Biden-Harris “Get the Lead Out” Inaugural Partner**

Boston Water and Sewer Commission has been chosen to participate in the Biden-Harris administration’s “Get the Lead Out” Partnership, comprised of over 100 state and local officials, water utilities, labor unions, and other organizations committed to advance and accelerate lead pipe funding and replacement. Boston Water and Sewer Commission recently was an invitee to and participant in the White House Summit on Accelerating Lead Pipe Replacement hosted by Vice President Kamala Harris, during which the Biden-Harris administration announced new actions and progress to deliver clean drinking water, replace lead pipes, and remediate lead paint.

BWSC Chief Engineer John P. Sullivan, P.E., was honored to represent the agency at the summit and participate in the Partnership’s launch.

"BWSC looks forward to joining this collaboration, which will be essential in creating new innovative practices and approaches and wider awareness throughout the country to effectuate the elimination of lead service lines in older properties," said Sullivan.

BWSC also will contribute its own significant expertise and experience removing lead service pipes to the Partnership’s collaborative efforts, as over the past three decades the agency has been a national leader in successfully removing lead pipes.

“As a result of the hard work of the men and women of BWSC who work tirelessly to prioritize lead pipe removal, in 2022 BWSC replaced over 300 lead service lines in Boston,” said BWSC Executive Director Henry F. Vitale.

The **Get Out the Lead Partnership** will further incentivize BWSC to remove Boston’s remaining lead service pipes, whose locations are largely identified but whose removal requires knowledge and cooperation on the part of their property owners. Executive Director Vitale said that, during this initiative, the Commission will:

- Increase its public awareness campaign through targeted outreach and inspections to property owners where the service pipe material is unknown;
- Increase efforts publicizing BWSC’s Private Lead Incentive Replacement Program which provides owners with up to **\$4,000.00** towards the cost of removal of the private lead service lines; and
- Advise all consumers of the dangers of lead in drinking water and inform them of steps to take to avoid lead exposure.

At the source of supply, Boston’s drinking water, which is provided by the Massachusetts

Water Resources Authority (MWRA), is lead-free when it leaves the reservoirs. Neither MWRA's, nor the Boston Water and Sewer Commission's water distribution mains contain lead. Replacement of lead service lines is an important public health issue because lead can enter the drinking water when the water remains unused for long periods of time and water service pipes and household plumbing containing lead dissolve into the water. Excessive amounts of lead in the body can cause serious adverse health effects including damage to the brain, red blood cells and kidneys. The greatest risk is to infants and young children, whose physical growth and mental development can be impaired by lead contamination. Also vulnerable are pregnant women, whose fetuses can be harmed by lead.

For more information about lead in drinking water and to find out how to test tap water for lead, Boston residents may contact the Commission at the Lead Hotline at (617) 989- 7888. Customers may also visit the Commission's website at [bwsc.org](http://bwsc.org) with any questions and obtain free brochures about lead in drinking water.

For more information about the **Get the Lead Our Partnership**, click below:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/01/27/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-announces-new-actions-and-progress-to-protect-communities-from-lead-pipes-and-paint/>

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Boston is home to New England's oldest and largest water, sewer and stormwater systems, which are owned, maintained and operated by Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC). Established in 1977, BWSC provides portable water and sewer services to more than one million people per day. BWSC is also the leading organizer of We Are All Connected, a campaign to raise public awareness about the importance of protecting and preserving Boston's waterways. For more information please visit: [www.bwsc.org](http://www.bwsc.org).