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MURPHY ADMINISTRATION LAUNCHES NJ-TAP TO HELP DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES DELIVER SAFE AND RELIABLE DRINKING WATER

(23/P018) TRENTON – New Jersey Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette today announced the launch of NJ-TAP, a groundbreaking initiative providing enhanced technical assistance to help disadvantaged communities provide safe and reliable drinking water to residents.

NJ-TAP (New Jersey Technical Assistance Program) will prioritize aid to communities identified as disadvantaged or overburdened to identify lead service lines, develop asset management and capital improvement plans, and identify sources of state and federal funding to assist with important water-quality improvement projects, the Commissioner announced during a news conference in Harrison, Hudson County. This aid is being provided free of charge to participating water systems.



"New Jersey's communities face many drinking water challenges, from lead to PFAS to aging pipes and older treatment plants," **Commissioner LaTourette said.** "Those challenges may for many practical reasons seem most daunting in the communities where the needs are the greatest. That's why we are launching NJ-TAP to offer DEP's resources and technical expertise to help water systems deliver on the promise of safe and reliable drinking water for everyone."

"I strongly encourage water systems to reach out to the DEP and take advantage of this invaluable assistance, which builds upon the Murphy Administration's commitment to upgrading infrastructure and providing safe drinking water through the state's innovative [Water Infrastructure Investment Plan](#)," Commissioner LaTourette added.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, signed by President Biden in November 2021, is providing an estimated additional \$1 billion of federal funding for New Jersey to implement projects enhancing drinking water quality and protecting state waterways, including lead service-line replacements, water treatment plant upgrades to address contaminants such as PFAS, and improvements to wastewater and stormwater infrastructure.

"Since its enactment, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act has delivered crucial funding to underserved communities in New Jersey to upgrade their aging water infrastructure to protect public health," **said U.S. Senator Cory Booker.** "This round of federal funding will allow more water infrastructure projects in our state to be completed and expand access to clean and safe drinking water across our state."

"I was proud to support the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act which is providing approximately \$1 billion over the next five years to New Jersey's Water Bank to help underserved communities fund critical lead service line replacement, remediate water contaminants, and upgrade and rehab aging water and sewer infrastructure," **said U.S. Senator Bob Menendez.** "These investments will not only ensure that all New Jersey families – no matter what their zip code is – have access to clean, safe water, but will also create jobs and help deliver long-overdue environmental justice. New Jersey is setting an example for the nation by making sure vital assistance reaches disadvantaged and overburdened communities."

"The \$1 billion dollar investment by the Biden Administration to replace New Jersey's outdated lead service lines, modernize our water infrastructure, and increase our public health safety with cleaner drinking water is transformational for the 8th District and for historically underserved communities," **said U.S. Rep. Rob Menendez.** "This Administration is investing in the safety and health of our residents, including in the Town of Harrison, and delivering for our families. Reducing the threats of lead in our drinking water starts with ensuring our pipes are replaced – this step forward will prevent lead exposure for our communities and for future generations. I look forward to working with President Biden, Governor Murphy, Commissioner LaTourette, and officials across our district to ensure that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law continues to benefit our cities and towns with these crucial investments."

"We know that there is no safe level of exposure to lead and that, unfortunately, historically underserved communities have borne the burden of lead in drinking water infrastructure for too long," **said EPA Regional Administrator Lisa F. Garcia.** "EPA's new Lead Service Line Replacement Accelerator program, combined with New Jersey's Technical Assistance Program (NJ-TAP) and



our increased investment through NJ's state revolving fund programs, demonstrate a shared commitment to ensuring no community is left behind and that every New Jersey community has access to clean drinking water."

"Every resident in New Jersey deserves access to clean water and a healthy environment. Commissioner LaTourette's NJ-Tap initiative that provides funding to communities for proper planning and design, will play a large part in helping achieve this goal," **said David Zimmer, Executive Director of the New Jersey Infrastructure Bank.** "The NJ Infrastructure Bank is pleased to assist the DEP in its endeavor because, together with the help and involvement of local officials, this goal becomes reality."

"NJ-TAP provides a smart, comprehensive, and equitable solution for New Jersey's lead service line problem. Disadvantaged communities need the technical assistance NJ-TAP will provide, and this is an important step for delivering clean, safe drinking water to all New Jersey families," **said Mike Hellstrom, Vice President and Eastern Regional Manager for the Laborer's International Union of North America.** "NJ-TAP will also serve as a catalyst to creating good-paying jobs for New Jersey residents. Repairing and modernizing our water systems is not only an investment in infrastructure. It is also an investment in our workforce, one that helps grow the economy, provide for families, and strengthens communities."

NJ-TAP has three major avenues of assistance:

- **Lead Assistance** helps water systems comply with state law requiring them to develop service line inventories and create a replacement plan for lead service lines that are identified. This program will help systems apply for a Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) loan.
- **General (non-lead) Assistance** helps water systems with technical, managerial, and financial capacity evaluations; develop an Asset Management Plan; develop a Capital Improvement Plan; and assists systems in applying for DWSRF loans. Target systems in this category have PFAS issues and/or general state Safe Drinking Water Act compliance issues.
- **Community Engagement and Outreach Assistance** helps the DEP develop a toolbox of resources that systems and local governments can utilize for community outreach. This assistance will also help water systems directly engage with their communities to encourage support for water infrastructure upgrades.

The first water systems to participate in NJ-TAP are Freehold Borough Water Department, the Atlantic City Municipal Utilities Authority, Gloucester City Water Department, Westville Water Department, and Salem Water Department.

Depending on the individual system's needs, participants receive assistance with lead service line inventories, replacement plans, asset management planning, and technical, managerial, and financial evaluations, among other services.

Water system representatives interested in participating in NJ-TAP should contact the NJDEP using the web form available at <https://www.nj.gov/dep/wiip/request.html>.

The NJ-TAP program complements and is in addition to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Lead Service Line Replacement Accelerator Program [announced last month](#). New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin are the first states to participate in this program, which focuses on identifying and replacing lead service lines in disadvantaged communities. The first New Jersey communities involved in the federal program are East Newark and Harrison.

Both the federal Lead Service Line Replacement Accelerator program and NJ-TAP are made possible by dedicated funding provided through the landmark federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

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