



COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

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March 2, 2016

Dear Senator:

The Coalition on Human Needs strongly urges you to vote for the Drinking Water Safety and Infrastructure Act (S. 2579). We also urge you to work actively with the Senate leadership so that this critically important legislation is scheduled for a floor vote as soon as possible.

The Stabenow-Inhofe-Peters Drinking Water Safety and Infrastructure Act will provide essential resources to help Flint, Michigan and other communities mitigate the tremendous human and economic damage resulting from lead contamination in the water supply. S. 2579 has bipartisan support, with 12 co-sponsors at this writing.

The [Coalition on Human Needs](http://www.chn.org) is made up of national organizations representing service providers, communities of faith, and civil rights, labor, and policy experts who join together to meet the needs of low-income and vulnerable people. Some in our national networks are providing direct service in Flint. Others serve children across the nation who have been poisoned by lead. We know the serious harm that can come from even modestly elevated blood lead levels, adversely affecting brain development and potentially requiring years of special education and health services. The unwise change in Flint's water source, made worse by the failure to treat the water to reduce the readily predictable corrosion, has resulted in [at least doubling the number of young children with dangerously high blood lead levels](#). In poor areas such as Ward 5 in Flint, the proportion of children with elevated blood lead levels tripled, to almost 16 percent, as compared to levels before the switch to Flint River water.

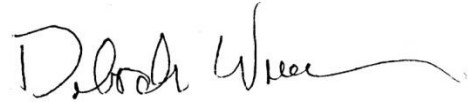
Two years after the contamination began to affect Flint, most residents remain unable to drink, cook or bathe safely in Flint's water. The health of thousands of Flint's children is threatened. Adults are also affected. Houses have been declared valueless by mortgagors.

This community is experiencing a disaster. Flint needs relief urgently. We recognize that lead contamination in the water supply is not unique to Flint; all communities similarly affected need help. S. 2579 provides an important first step, with \$70 million in credit subsidies for water infrastructure projects expected to generate \$700 million in financing; \$100 million in subsidized loans and grants in FYs 2016 and 2017, and \$50 million to address health needs. We understand that more resources will be needed, and that state and local funding must combine with federal assistance. But as with any other disaster, federal assistance must be made available now, to stop the suffering in the community and to speed the process of repair.

At a fundraising event livestreamed from Flint this past Sunday, Flint schoolchildren spoke to their neighbors and the nation. Jeremiah described his headaches, memory loss, and stomach pain, and his three months of missed school. The children were resilient and brave – they need and deserve urgent and

continuing support to overcome a problem not of their making. Please make the Drinking Water Safety and Infrastructure Act an urgent priority and vote for it.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah Weinstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Deborah Weinstein
Executive Director