Memorandum of Support

S.914 (Benjamin)

PURPOSE:
To protect public health by enacting stricter environmental standards for ambient lead and for the prevention of lead contamination of soils and on floors and window sills.

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT:
Exposure to lead at any level, as established by decades of scientific research, is harmful to children's cognitive and behavioral development.\(^1\) Children of color are disproportionately affected by lead exposure when all other variables are controlled.\(^2\) Recent research indicates a $30-46 Billion decrease in lifetime earnings for lead-exposed children, with the largest effects on Black children, making this an extremely pressing environmental justice issue.\(^3\) Research shows that each dollar spent on remediation of lead in households yields a $17 saving in health care and educational remediation.\(^4\)

New York State has old housing stock, in both our large cities and small-town, rural communities, with leaded paint on walls and woodwork. This paint is often prone to exposure as later layers of paint are abraded, from before lead in interior paint was made illegal in the 1970s. In addition, lead also contaminates roadside soil and driveways from previous decades of leaded gasoline. Young children ingest lead from old paint dust indoors and soil from playing outdoors, with toddlers most at risk from hand to mouth as they play on floors and in outdoor spaces.

While present law requires home sellers to sign declarations of the presence of lead, there is no requirement of proof. This bill would set new standards for lead on home surfaces and outdoor soils, and be an important step in further protecting our children from this developmental hazard.

Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter urges your support of S.914

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\(^3\)[(to be Submitted for publication 2021)] Racial/ethnic disparity in IQ Points and lifetime earnings lost to early childhood blood lead. Deniz Yeter, Joseph Boyle, David C. Wheeler, Deena Woodall, Ellen C. Banks, Michael A. Portman, Michael Aschner.
