Memorandum of Support

February 28, 2022

S.1256-B (Gianaris)/A.4551-B (O’Donnell)

**Summary:** Requires potable water testing at state and local parks at least once every three years and requires any finding of lead contamination to be abated within ninety days.

**Statement of Support:** There is no safe level of lead exposure. Exposure to lead at any level, as established by decades of scientific research, is harmful to children’s cognitive and behavioral development.¹ Young children are at the highest risk of experiencing long term damage from lead and other dangerous neurotoxins, and New York must take steps to ensure its drinking water is lead-free.

Recent test results in New York City public parks have exhibited alarming levels of lead in drinking water. Between May and August 2019, 293 water fountains located across 196 New York City parks detected lead levels greater than 15 parts per billion (ppb) in at least one sample.² Many other fountains tested had detectable levels of lead below 15 ppb, which still poses health risks.

Under this legislation, all state and local parks must test for lead in drinking water at least once every three years and conduct remediation within 90 days wherever the lead action level, to be determined by the Department of Health, is exceeded. The bill would also provide more transparency for park-goers, requiring warnings and test results to be made public. Specifically, the bill would require the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation to make a copy of all testing and any lead remediation plans available online on the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation's website.

Sierra Club is devoted to protecting public health and the environment by decreasing exposure to hazardous substances that often end up in our air, water, communities, and natural places. Park visitors deserve access to an adequate supply of safe, potable drinking water. This legislation will help make sure that is a reality statewide, through necessary consistent monitoring and remediation.

**The Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Strongly Urges Your Support of S.1256-B /A.4551-B.**

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² https://www.nycgovparks.org/about/health-and-safety-guide/lead