

Fixing Clean Water Infrastructure

JUNE 2021

AS OF 2016

5,300+ water systems were in violation of EPA's lead and copper rule



States only
took action

817
times

The EPA only
took action

88
times

Clean water is a basic human right, and the federal government has a responsibility to maintain sustainable, clean water infrastructure systems across the country. The American Jobs Plan (AJP) allocates \$56 billion to support state and local water infrastructure programs through a series of grants and loaning programs. The AJP also allocates \$10 billion to eliminate toxic PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), which the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified as an urgent health concern, from our water supply. The White House has endorsed the Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act of 2021 introduced by Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), a bipartisan piece of legislation that recently passed the Senate and would allocate a \$35 billion fund to states and tribes to improve their water infrastructure systems.

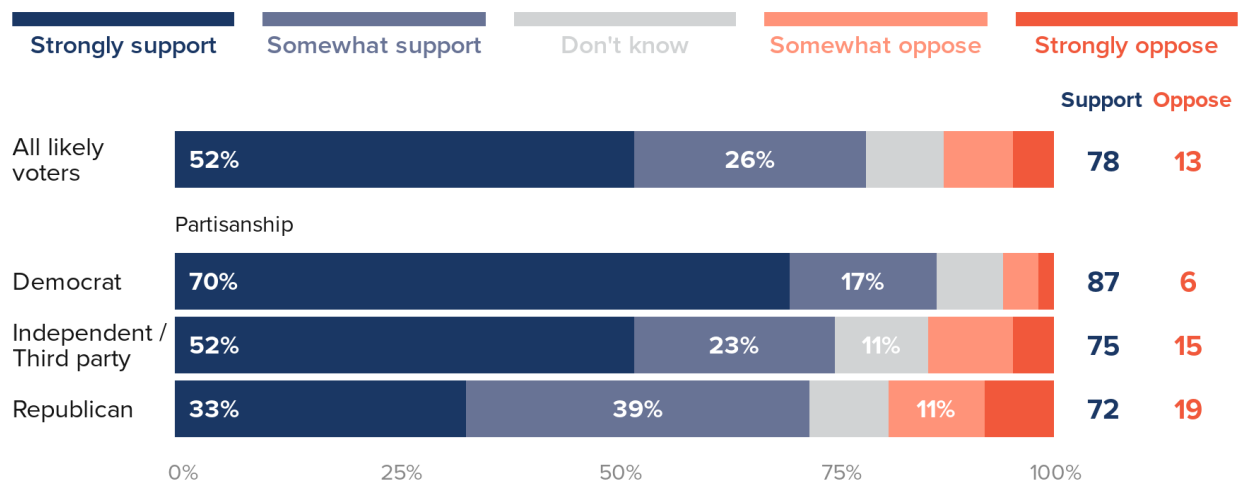
Addressing lead contamination in our water system is a top priority in the AJP. Lead exposure poses serious health risks, especially for children and pregnant women. According to the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA), even minimal amounts of lead poisoning can cause significant, lifelong [neurological damage to children](#) and induce low birth weights or premature births in [pregnant women](#). Due to decades of government inaction, millions of Americans remain exposed to lead in their water, with low-income communities of color most disproportionately [impacted](#). The crisis in [Flint, Michigan](#) that began in 2014 after [thousands of children](#) were exposed to lead could have been prevented by federal action to remove and replace outdated lead drinking water pipes. Without federal intervention, similar crises will likely occur in the future.

The AJP aims to address this injustice through an investment of \$45 billion into EPA drinking water ([WIIN](#)) grants to replace 100 percent of the nation’s lead water pipes and service lines. The aforementioned Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act of 2021 would begin the process of removing some lead pipes. Though the passage of this bill is an encouraging first step, lawmakers should make investments to ensure every American—no matter where they live—has access to clean drinking water.

Data for Progress consistently finds that ensuring all Americans have access to clean drinking water is [one of the most popular climate and environmental justice policies](#) that we poll. Over three-quarters of likely voters (78 percent), including overwhelming bipartisan majorities of Democrats (87 percent), Independents (75 percent), and Republicans (72 percent), support the AJP’s proposal to remove and replace all lead drinking water pipes to ensure all Americans have access to clean drinking water.

An Overwhelming Bipartisan Majority of Voters Support Federal Investments in Drinking Water Infrastructure

Do you support or oppose the following proposal in the American Jobs Plan: Removing and replacing all lead drinking water pipes to ensure all Americans have access to clean drinking water



May 5–6, 2021 survey of 1,328 likely voters

DATA FOR PROGRESS