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BILL: Senate Bill 481
TITLE: Environment – Drinking Water Outlets in School Buildings – Elevated Level of Lead and Grant Program
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POSITION: SUPPORTS
COMMITTEE: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
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Senate Bill 481 alters the definition of "elevated level of lead" to mean a lead concentration in drinking water exceeding 5 parts per billion for certain provisions of law relating to testing for the presence of lead in certain drinking water outlets in certain school buildings; requiring the Department of the Environment, in consultation with the State Department of Education, to establish and administer a certain grant program to assist local school systems with certain costs associated with implementing certain remedial measures; etc.

PSSAM **supports** Senate Bill 481 with one clarification.

Local superintendents recognize that elevated lead levels in drinking water is a critical safety issue and we support measures that reduce the exposure of our students to serious health problems. As a result of legislation passed during the 2017 legislative session, all drinking water outlets in schools must be tested while schools are in session for elevated levels of lead. If test results from a fixture are found to be above 20 ppb, the action level designated by both the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), local school systems must remove the fixture from use and implement remediation measures.

PSSAM appreciates the intent of this legislation to provide grant funds to assist local school systems with costs associated with implementing measures to address findings of elevated levels of lead in drinking water outlets. During tight fiscal budgets, school systems value any additional financial resources that are available to assist with the costs associated with lead poisoning remediation projects.

However, PSSAM must oppose the elevation level of 5 ppb as required by this legislation. The current level of 20 ppb as mentioned above meets the designated level by EPA and MDE. Local school systems have just completed evaluations and implemented remediation projects under the current federal and state guidelines. We strongly believe that altering the "elevated level of lead" to exceed what is required by experts in the field, as well as EPA and MDE, is simply not warranted and would be an additional burden on our school systems.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM **supports** the grant program provided under Senate Bill 481. However, we oppose the elevated level as required by this legislation.