

Portland City Council Agenda Written Testimony

Row 4

Name	Portland Advocates for Leadfree Drinking Water; National Coalition for leadfree water
Agenda Item	417 (391)
Position	
Comments	
Email Address	lorjmcfarlane@gmail.com
Submitted	05/24/23 9:18 AM
Final Meeting Date	05/24/23
Public Records Acknowledgement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Attachment	Yes

5/17/23 Public Communications (in-person and virtual)

Vote NO on Ordinance 391

Portland Water Bureau's "Lead Hazard Reduction Program" ask to extend \$129K for one .5 and two .1 FTE personnel at Multnomah County Health Department (MCHD) Leadline

TY. We are so thankful to the many independent experts willing to answer questions that our own water bureau has not.

We think you, Commissioners and the public, deserve to hear the omissions re this Multnomah County Health position, which PWB is requesting to fund for \$129,000. This ordinance is primarily for one .5 FTE specialist position at the County's Leadline.

When we asked the Leadline specialist for lead in water data in the lead-poisoning homes that he investigates, he said this :

"Only a fraction of the [lead-poisoning] cases over the last 5 years will have lead-in-water test results."

Instead, Leadline primarily focuses on lead paint and *non-water* exposure sources, per Portland Water Bureau's 1997 Lead Hazard Reduction Program. But as researchers and scientists know, lead in drinking water is different from lead from other sources; it disproportionately affects developmentally vulnerable children and pregnant mothers. In fact, "Tap water can account for more than 85% of total lead exposure among infants consuming reconstituted formula." [Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, Flint pediatrician, NIH research]

Even so, the Leadline specialist rarely - if ever - tests the tap water in his lead-poisoning case home investigations. Instead this ordinance will fund "collecting requests" for a DIY lead-in-water kit. You won't find lead in water if you don't test and this lead specialist doesn't. Further challenging is his belief; he's made it clear (on the record) that tap water here is not a problem, despite the news articles, congressional testimony, and the utility's many lead in water exceedances.

Secondly,

perhaps it's more important to call out the faulty water test kits themselves, that the PWB Director Solmer and Water Commissioner Mapps have aggressively promoted to customers and Leadline clients. To be clear: these lead-in-water test kits can and do grossly under-represent and may even miss lead coming out of taps.

Finally,,

The Portland Water Director and City attorney wrote **"lead poisoning PREVENTION"** into this agreement - 6 times - yet if PWB were truly engaging in lead PREVENTION, they would not only be testing every one of these homes using science, and sound water testing

protocol, critically, they'd be handing out certified lead-reducing water filters as the first default response.

If you read the exhibits (closely), none of that is going to happen, and never has.

We urge you to reject Portland Water's ask for \$129,000 today. To be perfectly blunt, Portland Water is paying MCHD Leadline to look the other way. PWB should be using our water funding to mitigate lead in water, NOT to mitigate lead paint. For these and other reasons,

Please Vote No on Consent Agenda #417

Respectfully,
Local and national lead in drinking water coalitions

May 24, 2023 :

417

[Authorize Intergovernmental Agreement with Multnomah County Health Department for \\$129,000 to conduct lead-related public health services for the Lead Hazard Reduction Program \(Ordinance\)](#)

Introduced by: Commissioner Mingus Mapps

Bureau: Water

Second reading agenda item 391.

From: [Dee White](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: testimony agenda item 391/417
Date: Wednesday, May 24, 2023 9:43:08 AM
Attachments: [Dee White testimony May 17 2023 AGENDA ITEM 391.pdf](#)

Attached please find written version of the in person testimony I gave last week. Today is the second reading.

Thank you!
Dee White

Testimony from Dee White

May 17, 2023

Agenda Item 391

[Authorize Intergovernmental Agreement with Multnomah County Health Department for \\$129,000 to conduct lead-related public health services for the Lead Hazard Reduction Program](#)

(Ordinance)

Introduced by

Commissioner Mingus Mapps

My name is Dee White.

The first recital on this contract is false. The water bureau is on the record for ending in 2022 their misdirected lead reduction program for compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule. For them to say they are transitioning their way of complying with a federal law is NOT legitimate. This contract does not extend this now illegitimate compliance program. This contract is solely a vehicle whereby ratepayer funds are being used to pay the salaries for a program run by Multnomah County.

This contract should not be approved. It is another example of the water bureau inappropriately spending ratepayer money – in this case, for Personnel in the Multnomah County Health Department. This personnel expense should be borne by Multnomah county and their tax revenue, not via our water bill.

This contract is only for Personnel costs. There are no materials costs. There are no deliverables. The majority (\$85,500) of this contract is going to ½ of one employee's total compensation at the health department. The rest (\$43,500) is directed to a manager's and office assistant's compensation in the health department.

According to this contract, the one and only task performed by these employees that is related to water, is

Quote: "collecting requests for lead-in-water test kits and sending the list of requests to the City on a weekly basis". End Quote

The remaining tasks on this contract are NOT related to water but ratepayers will be paying for them anyway and this is illegal.

The Court has ordered that The spending of ratepayer dollars must be related to providing clean, safe water to Portland water users. Thus, the vast majority of this contract cost is illegitimate spending of ratepayer money.

Meanwhile, the water bureau's \$20 million treatment facility that was opened and began operation last year has failed at significantly reducing the lead in Portland's water. Do not think, commissioners for even one second that this facility is anything other than a complete waste of ratepayer money and a forewarned failure. Portland Water bureau continues to fail at protecting the public's health with their continuing high lead levels in our drinking water.

But to loop back: this contract should not be approved. Ratepayer money should not be used to pay for county personnel performing tasks not related to water.

City Council Meeting - Wednesday, May 17, 2023 9:30 a.m.

Agenda No.	First Name	Last Name
391-01	Kimberlee	Goheen Elbon
391-02	Dee	White
391-03	Portland Advocates	for Leadfree Drinking Water