



Government of the District of Columbia

February 13, 2004

The Honorable Tom Davis
Chairman, House Committee on Government Reform
2348 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Davis:

We write today concerning the problem with unacceptable levels of lead in some District residents' drinking water. And, we truly appreciate your deference to District leaders on this issue. On Wednesday, we established the Interagency Task Force on Lead in Drinking Water. It will look into ways the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (WASA) can reduce lead in water, ensure that high-risk populations receive priority lead pipe replacement, identify funding sources to help pay for replacements and make certain WASA and the DC Department of Health communicate critical information to citizens promptly and clearly.

Because there are two essential components to this matter, we feel it is important that each component be investigated by the appropriate entity. On the local side, WASA is a quasi-independent District government agency with direct oversight by the city. On the federal side, there is the Washington Aqueduct, which is responsible for collecting, purifying and pumping the potable water utilized by WASA and is a division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Although the Council's Committee on Public Works and the Environment has had the Washington Aqueduct present and testifying at its hearings, and it is a member of our Task Force, we think it is important to have an additional forum where officials from federal entities, such as the Washington Aqueduct and EPA, could be questioned by a body with appropriate legislative oversight authority. We feel that this would complement and expedite the work of the Council's Committee, and the Task Force we co-chair. Therefore, we are respectfully requesting that you, as Chairman of the House Committee on Government Reform, hold hearings on this topic.

We look forward to your response to our request.

Sincerely,

Anthony A. Williams
Mayor
District of Columbia

Carol Schwartz
Councilmember, At-Large
Council of the District of Columbia
Chair, Committee on Public Works and
the Environment