FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Strengthens Standards to Protect Millions from Exposure to Lead Paint Dust, Announces New Actions to Address Toxic Lead Exposure

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Today's announcement is expected to reduce the lead exposure of up to 1.2 million people every year and represents one of over 100 actions taken by the Administration in 2024 to reduce lead poisoning

President Biden and Vice President Harris have been clear that all Americans deserve to live free from fear of toxic lead exposure. Since Day One, the Biden-Harris Administration has marshalled a whole of government effort to reduce all sources of lead exposure, issuing a comprehensive Lead Pipe and Paint Action Plan that guides federal action to achieve a lead-free future.

Today, as we continue to mark National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, the Biden-Harris Administration is taking action to further reduce lead exposure by issuing a final Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rule to strengthen requirements for the removal of lead paint dust in pre-1978 housing and child care facilities.

Lead is a neurotoxin that can irreversibly harm brain development in children, lower IQ, cause behavioral problems, and lead to life-long health effects. There is no safe level of lead exposure. Yet, due to decades of inequitable infrastructure development and underinvestment, lead poisoning disproportionately affects low-income communities and communities of color.

Today's final rule sets new standards for lead abatement activities that will better protect children and communities from the harmful effects of exposure to dust generated from lead paint. The rule will help protect people in communities across the country from these harms, and is expected to reduce the lead

exposures of up to nearly 1.2 million people every year, providing public health and economic benefits up to 30 times greater than the costs. Although the United States banned lead-based paint in residences in 1978, an estimated 31 million houses built before 1978 still contain lead-based paint, and 3.8 million are home to one or more child under the age of six, putting them at risk of lead exposure.

Since the announcement of the Biden-Harris Lead Pipe and Paint Action Plan, the Administration has taken hundreds of actions across more than 10 agencies to reduce the risk of lead poisoning in drinking water, paint, soil, food and household products, the workplace, and to combat lead exposure internationally – including more than 100 actions in the past year alone. Some of the actions since the latest Action Plan progress update in November 2023 include:

Reducing Exposure to Lead from Paint and Dust in the Home – Lead in household dust originates from indoor sources such as deteriorated, lead-based paint on surfaces. In the last year, the Administration has worked diligently to identify, help tackle, and eliminate these exposures in several ways:

- Earlier this month, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced more than $420 million in awards to remove lead hazards from homes, including HUD-assisted homes, ensuring the safety of children, residents, and families. This includes $2 million to remove other housing-related hazards from homes in conjunction with weatherization efforts, and nearly $10 million to facilitate research on better identifying and controlling lead and other housing-related hazards. These awards are part of President Biden's Justice40 Initiative, which seeks to ensure that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal climate, clean energy, affordable and sustainable housing, and other investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

- In August 2024, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a new final rule updating the Head Start Program Performance Standards. This rule requires Head Start programs to protect children from exposure to lead in water and paint through regular testing and inspection and remediate lead in Head Start facilities where lead exists.

- In 2024, EPA conducted approximately 1,400 compliance monitoring activities for lead-based paint in over 190 communities, more than a third of which were communities with environmental justice concerns. Additionally, EPA's Federal Facilities Enforcement Office conducted compliance monitoring activities at 18 military installations in 2024. This work protects our service members and their families from exposure to lead-based paint in their homes at military bases.

Reducing Exposure to Lead from Drinking Water – Millions of buildings still receive their water through a lead pipe. The Biden-Harris Administration has taken historic steps to meet President Biden's commitment to replace every lead pipe in the country within a decade:

- Earlier this month President Biden traveled to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to announce a final rule that requires drinking water systems nationwide to replace lead service lines within 10 years. This rule will protect children from brain damage, prevent up to 900,000 infants being born with low birth weight, and protect 1,100 adults from premature death from heart disease every year.

- President Biden secured a historic $15 billion in funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law specifically dedicated for replacing lead service lines, and provided an additional $2.6 billion from his Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for drinking water upgrades and lead pipe replacements, along with an additional $11.7 billion in general-purpose funding through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund which can also be used for lead pipe replacement. To date, EPA has announced over $18 billion of this funding across every state. Nearly half of this funding is required to flow to disadvantaged communities, in the form of grants and zero-interest loans.

- Thanks to the Biden-Harris Administration's actions, cities across the country are already making progress in replacing lead pipes. Cities with some of the highest numbers of lead pipes, like Milwaukee, Detroit, Pittsburgh, St. Paul, and Denver, have received funding from the Administration and are now on track to replace all lead pipes within 10 years or less. Under this Administration, over 367,000 lead pipes have been replaced nationwide, benefitting nearly 1 million people.

- Funding from the American Rescue Plan's $350 billion State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund can be used by states and communities to replace lead service lines and remediate lead paint. To date, well over $20 billion nationwide has been invested in water infrastructure projects.

- During this Administration, the EPA has also used its Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program to provide well over $350 million in financing to communities for lead pipe replacement.

- Since launching in November 2023, EPA's Get the Lead Out Initiative has provided technical assistance to public water systems nationwide to identify lead pipes and accelerate their replacement. Prioritizing disadvantaged and underserved communities, the initiative is providing assistance to a growing list of public water systems, including in Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois, and facilitates access to funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This initiative builds on the partnership between EPA, the Department of Labor (DOL), and 40 underserved communities to support lead pipe replacement.

- In January 2023, the White House Summit on Accelerating Lead Pipe Replacement hosted by Vice President Harris, announced new actions and progress to deliver clean drinking water, replace lead pipes, and remediate lead paint to protect children and communities across America, including the Biden-Harris Get the Lead Out Partnership comprised of state and local officials, water utilities, labor unions, and other nongovernmental organizations who committed to advance and accelerate lead pipe replacement. This White House Partnership spurred the creation of a the Great Lakes Lead Pipes Partnership, a first-of-its kind, mayor-led effort to accelerate lead pipe replacement in cities with the heaviest lead burdens.

- In August 2024, EPA announced $26 million in grant funding to protect children from lead in drinking water at schools and childcare facilities across the country. These grants will be used by 55 States and territories to reduce lead exposure where children learn and play.

- The Department of the Interior conducted more than 330 water system assessments at all Indian Affairs-owned sites, including schools, offices and detention centers, among others. Beyond service lines, assessments collected lead/copper samples to identify lead sources in water distribution systems and where lead levels affected drinking points DOI coordinated immediate

remediation strategies and implemented actions including alternative water sourcing and confirmatory sampling.

Reducing Exposure to Lead from Air – Major sources of lead in the air include emissions from manufacturing, waste and metals processing, and aircraft operating on leaded aviation fuel. To tackle these emissions, the Biden-Harris Administration has taken the following actions:

- In January 2024, EPA released the Integrated Science Assessment for Lead as part of its review of the lead National Ambient Air Quality Standards. This technical document, along with additional technical and policy assessments, will provide the scientific foundation for EPA's decisions as it regulates air lead exposure.

- In October 2023, EPA issued a final determination that emissions of lead from aircraft engines that operate on leaded fuel cause or contribute to air pollution which may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health and welfare. With this final determination, EPA and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have begun work to consider regulatory options to address lead emissions from aircrafts.

Reducing Exposure to Lead from Soil – Lead contamination at legacy pollution sites from past industrial operations, like lead mining and smelting, can accumulate in soil and poses a threat to human health and the environment. Reducing lead levels in soils can reduce exposure risks.

- The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invests $5 billion to clean up legacy pollution, including lead contamination, at Superfund and Brownfields sites. In Fiscal Year 2024, EPA completed 63 Superfund cleanup projects that addressed lead contamination in soil to protect families and children from the harmful impacts of lead. In addition, lead is the environmental contaminant most commonly reported by EPA Brownfields cleanup grant recipients. In fiscal year 2024, Brownfields grant recipients completed 63 brownfields cleanups that addressed lead contamination.

- In January 2024, after years of research and advanced understanding of the latest science on lead, EPA issued new guidance to improve screenings for lead in residential soils at Superfund and other contaminated sites. This new guidance cuts in half the recommended screening levels issued 30 years ago and takes into account the potential for cumulative impacts by

recommending even more stringent levels in areas where there may be additional sources of lead exposure, such as lead in drinking water or lead paint in homes.

Reducing Exposure to Lead from Food and Household Products – Lead may be present in food when it is in the environment where foods are grown, raised, or processed. To reduce the risk to children of ingesting lead in food, the Administration is working to addressed lead hazards in processed foods.

- In September 2024, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) published a new study on dietary exposure from lead in infants and young children. This action is part of the agency's Closer to Zero effort, which sets forth the FDA's science-based approach to continually reduce exposure to lead, arsenic, cadmium, mercury and other contaminants to the lowest levels possible in foods eaten by babies and young children.

Protecting People from Lead Exposure in the Workplace – Workers can be exposed to lead as a result of the production, use, maintenance, recycling, and disposal of lead material and products. In 2024, the Administration sought to protect workers through a number of actions.

- In April 2024, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) released Trends in Workplace Lead Exposure, monitoring workplace lead exposure trends through the Adult Blood Lead Epidemiology and Surveillance program.
- In March 2024, at the direction of President Biden, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that all veterans exposed to toxins and other hazards during military service—including lead—are now eligible for VA health care.

Accelerating Innovations to Improve Blood Lead Testing – Testing blood is the best way to determine if a person has had lead exposure, as there are often no immediate symptoms when someone is exposed to lead. Based on blood lead test results, healthcare providers can recommend follow-up actions and care.

- In March 2024, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced Phase 2 of the Lead Detect Prize on challenge.gov, inviting selected Phase 1 participants to develop their winning concepts into detailed designs. This challenge provides a $1 million prize pool to accelerate the development of next-generation point-of-care blood lead testing technology.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the FDA support the challenge, and it spotlights the urgent need to identify and foster new or existing breakthrough solutions and products for optimal lead testing in children.

Establishing Domestic Partnerships to Reduce All Lead Exposure – The Administration is engaging stakeholders in a number of ways to reduce community exposure to lead in the United States.

- In July 2024, the President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children published the Progress Report on the Federal Lead Action Plan, a comprehensive update on the government's progress since 2018 toward reducing childhood lead exposures. HUD, EPA, and HHS, as co-leading members of the Task Force's Lead Subcommittee, are leading aggressive actions to combat lead exposure. The Federal Lead Action Plan promotes a vision that the United States will become a place where children, especially those in communities with environmental justice concerns, can live, learn and play and remain safe from lead exposure and its harmful effects.

- In June 2024, the CDC published the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention National Classroom program. This program features multiple training methods and outreach strategies, including slide presentations, training videos, webinars, podcasts, and materials posted online to engage a broad range of audiences, including public health professionals, other physicians, general audiences, and high school students, through social media platforms and many other outlets.

- In February 2024, the EPA in collaboration with HUD and CDC/ASTDR published *A U.S. Lead Exposures Hotspot Analysis,* which identifies states and counties with the highest potential lead exposure risk from old housing sources of lead. This analysis applied science-based methods based on available data, continuing the agencies' commitment to advancing whole of government efforts to focus lead actions in disproportionately impacted locations.

- EPA continues to establish and lead U.S. whole-of-government partnerships to develop and apply a science-based blueprint to identify communities with high lead exposures and improve their health outcomes in support of EPA's Lead Strategy and priority activities of the President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children.

Spearheading an International Effort to Reduce Global Lead Exposure – Amidst historic actions taken

domestically to combat lead exposure in the United States, the Administration has built an unprecedented global coalition to tackle lead exposure in low- and middle-income countries, where one in two children has elevated levels of lead in their blood.

- In September 2024, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) joined UNICEF and over 60 partners and 26 countries to launch the Partnership for a Lead-Free Future, the first-ever public-private partnership dedicated to tackling lead exposure in low- and middle-income countries. The Partnership committed $150 million toward this effort—at least 10 times the average estimated annual investment to combat lead exposure internationally over the past five years.

- Earlier this year, USAID, through its Enterprises for Development, Growth, and Empowerment (EDGE) Fund, provided $5 million to the Lead Exposure Elimination Project (LEEP) to accelerate the global transition to lead-free paint. Spanning over 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Central Asia, and Europe, the LEEP partnership will support governments in introducing lead paint regulations and demonstrate how the private sector can reduce lead exposure, saving lives and protecting communities.