

# MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Land and Materials Administration

1800 Washington Boulevard · Suite 610 · Baltimore Maryland 21230-1719

410-537-3304 · 800-633-6101 · [www.mde.maryland.gov](http://www.mde.maryland.gov)

---



## **03/05/26 · 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. · Google Meet Lead Commission Distributed Meeting Material**

- Agenda 03/02/26
- Minutes 02/25/26
- Legislation 2026
- Maryland Lead Commission PP Presentation-EPA Lead and Copper Rule Improvements
- Article Bridge Shedding
- Article from Baltimore Banner

# MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Land and Materials Administration

1800 Washington Boulevard • Suite 610 • Baltimore Maryland 21230-1719

410-537-3304 • 800-633-6101 • [www.mde.maryland.gov](http://www.mde.maryland.gov)

---

## LEAD POISONING PREVENTION COMMISSION

March 5, 2026 • 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. • Hybrid Meeting

### Agenda

- Welcome, Introductions, Opening Remarks
- Approval of Minutes – February 2026
- Old & New Business
  - Committee Assignments and Structure
    - General Committees
      - Health Policy, Testing and Screening Strategies
      - Housing Policy - Including Inspection Standards
      - Community Engagement Including Resource Mapping and Public Outreach
      - Training and Accreditation (Contractor and Workforce Development)
      - Resource Development -(including Lead and Healthy Homes Fund)
      - Legislative - Research/discuss SB203/HB252 implementation: Lead Insurance/Bond Fund
    - Ad HOC Committees
      - Recommendations on Rural Community Strategies for MDH and State (fold into Health Policy)
      - Committee to Research Discuss Implementation of a Lead Insurance/Bond Fund (fold into Housing Policy)
  - Commission Review and Input on Annual Report - Review Timeline for Input and Guidelines
  - Updates on Issue:
    - 28th Street Bridge
    - Lead in Cooper Rule
    - Call for Applications Thriving Communities
    - Lead Resources Tracker
- Agency Hot Topics/Current Events
  - **MDE** (Maryland Department of the Environment) Fred Banks
  - **MDH** (Maryland Department of Health) Dr. Cliff Mitchell
  - **MDAAP** (American Academy of Pediatrics, Maryland Chapter) Dr. Michael Ichniowski
  - **MSDE/OCC** (Maryland State Department of Education/Office of Child Care) Manjula Paul
  - **MIA** (Maryland Insurance Administration)
  - **MD-DHCD** (Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development) Nicola Tran
  - **BC-DHCD** (Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development) Nicole Hart
  - **BCHD** (Baltimore City Health Department): Brionna Adams
  - **BRU** (Baltimore Renters United) Naadiya Hutchinson
  - **GHHI** (Green & Healthy Homes Initiative) Ruth Ann Norton
- Commissioner Comments and Updates
- Public Comments and Updates
- Next Meeting Reminder: Thursday, April 2, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

# MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Land and Materials Administration

1800 Washington Boulevard • Suite 610 • Baltimore Maryland 21230-1719

410-537-3304 • 800-633-6101 • [www.mde.maryland.gov](http://www.mde.maryland.gov)

## LEAD POISONING PREVENTION COMMISSION February 5, 2026 · 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. · Hybrid Meeting Draft Meeting Minutes

### Members Present:

Adam Skolnik	Fred Banks	Nicola Tran
Alexandra Nestadt	Jacob Benzaquen	Ruth Ann Norton
Barbara Moore	Manjula Paul	Susan Kleinhammer
Christina Peusch	Michael Ichniowski	
Cliff Mitchell	Naadiya Hutchinson	

### Members Absent:

Mary Washington  
Nicole Hart

### Guests Present:

A.C. Alrey-City of Cambridge	Denifah Bun-Tejan-MDE	Patrick Connor-CECS
Adewole Adegborioye-MDE	Eunice Johnson-GEO	Rashad Taylor-MDE
Adonna Patterson-MDE	Felicia Graves-MDE	Reva Smith-MWPH
Anastasia Solano-MDE	Jeanny Pope-OAG	Rick Kessler-MDE
Andrew Roelke-MDE	Jennifer Martin-Public	Riley Rashon-GHHI
Ardenia Holland-MDE	Jennifer Thompkins-The Verlyn Group	Sam McGranahan-Del. Rosenberg
Ari Goldstein-MDH	Katherine Rush-MDE	Samantha
Ashley Ray-MDE	Katherine Taylor-BC-DHCD	Jacobs-Cribbs-HCHD
Attilah Edges-BCHD	Kevin Stanley-MDE	Shadia Musa-GHHI
Bay Hanson-GHHI	Leslie Delcid-MDE	Sheneka Frasier-MDE
Brionna Adams-GHHI	Malik Gupta-Del. Rosenberg	Stephanie Cobb-Williams-MDE
Brooke Paluzzi-BC-DHCD	Marjorie D'Ambrosio-MDE	Thelonious Williams-MDH
Carlie Furtaw-GHHI	Matthew Koning-MDE	Tim Rule-MDE
Chris White-ARC	Nancy Servatius-MDH	Wade McCord-MDE
David Griffin-MDE	Neil Roseman-Public	Wendy Phillips-MDE
Dawn Joy-AMA	Nekia Randall-BC-DHCD	William Doyle-HCHD

### Documents Distributed:

- February 2026 Agenda

### **Welcome and Introductions:**

Ruth Ann Norton, President of the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) and Commission Chair opened the meeting and conducted introductions.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

The minutes from the previous meeting were presented for approval and adopted following a motion and second. The minutes were approved by the Commission.

### **Old & New Business:**

- **Legislative Update on Performance Bonds and Insurance (SB 203 and HB 252):** Adam Skolnik, Executive Director for the Maryland Multi-Housing Association, Inc. (MMHA) and Commissioner, initiated the legislative discussion by referencing the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) Departmental bill, SB 203 and HB 252, concerning performance bonds and liability insurance, expressing concern that standard liability policies would exclude fraud. Frederick Banks, Program Manager for MDE's Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (LPPP) and Commissioner clarified that the bill grants MDE the authority to require such provisions, allowing for options like performance bonds or Errors and Omissions (E&O) insurance, and that they are consulting with the Maryland Insurance Authority (MIA) and the Maryland Home Inspector Commission. Chair Norton strongly encouraged any opposition to testify at the hearing for transparency, emphasizing the bill's necessity to protect tenants, homeowners, and property owners from inspectors who may be liable but unable to pay judgments.
- **Discussion on Bond Availability for Inspectors:** Commissioner Skolnik questioned the practicality of the bill, noting that if no insurance or bonding company will write policies for inspectors in this limited scope, the law would be impossible to follow, potentially hindering inspectors from working. Susan Kleinhammer, President of Leadtec Services, Inc. (LSI) and Commissioner supported Commissioner Skolnik's concern, emphasizing the need to investigate the availability and other variables related to bonding before enacting the law, though they agreed on the goal of ensuring people can collect on civil penalties.
- **Stakeholder Feedback on SB 203 and HB 252:** Patrick Connor, President of Connor Environmental Consulting Services expressed that the topic is more complex than currently discussed, confirming that professional liability insurance would not cover fraud. He also raised the challenge of contract law, where inspectors contract with property owners or management companies, not occupants, and doubted whether smaller inspectors could qualify for a bond. Chair Norton, asserted the need for a system equivalent to Maryland Home Improvement Commission (MHIC) licensing, which requires a bond for contractors, to protect both property owners and residents by setting a high bar for environmental health inspections.
- **Proposal for a State-Sponsored Fund for Lead Inspectors:** Mr. Connor proposed considering a state-sponsored system where inspectors pay into a fund, arguing this could better ensure protection for the occupant and property owner, rather than relying solely on the insurance industry. Commissioner Skolnik called this idea "simplistic genius," noting that the Real Estate Commission already uses a similar model with a fund realtors pay into, suggesting MDE could oversee such a fund. Commissioner Norton agreed with the state-sponsored fund concept, acknowledging it might require seed money and a ramp-up period. Commissioner Kleinhammer also supported the idea but noted that inspectors would likely pass the cost onto the inspection fee, increasing the overall cost of inspections.
- **Updates on Lead Ammunition and Baby Food Legislation:** Commissioner Banks provided a brief update on Senate Bill 181 regarding lead ammunition, noting that there was a previous discussion and

MDE supplied neutral comments. Riley Rashon, Family Advocate Attorney for GHHI testified in favor of Senate Bill 181, which would phase out leaded ammunition where no commercially viable alternative exists, addressing opposition arguments about alternatives and academic literature regarding health risks. Michael Ichniowski, Pediatric Environmental Health advocate for the Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) and Commissioner reported that House Bill 196, which aims to expand heavy metal testing of baby foods to include infant cereals and formula, has been introduced, and the academy chapter supports this bill.

- **Delegate Rosenberg's Bills for Lead Poisoning Reduction:** Ms. Rashon discussed two pending bills requested by Delegate Rosenberg. One bill would modify the requirements for MDE to issue a notice of defect for lead by removing the requirement for an independent inspection, returning to the pre-2019 standard while keeping the Elevated Blood Lead (EBL) level risk level at 3.5 micrograms per deciliter, aiming to prevent delays in care for high lead level cases. The second bill seeks to include single-tenant occupancies under the lead poisoning reduction subtitle to cover tenants who rent rooms but share access to amenities like bathrooms and kitchens, addressing current gaps in coverage while including language to ease MDE regulation by focusing on areas with shared access.
- **Concerns with Expedited Wrongful Detainer Proceedings:** Ms. Rashon also flagged House Bill 59, relating to expedited wrongful detainer proceedings for properties listed for sale or lease. She noted concern that landlords have filed such cases against lawful tenants attempting to force them to address lead issues, potentially manipulating the law to circumvent the lead statute requirements. Sam McGranahan, Delegate Rosenberg's chief of staff, confirmed that the bills were submitted to DLS, and are awaiting return.
- **Lead and Copper Rule Update and Environmental Grants** Ms. Rashon reported that she plans to submit an amicus brief by mid-March focusing on the disproportionate impact of lead on marginalized communities and the feasibility of meeting the established deadlines by citing examples from cities that have made substantial progress. Chair Norton also shared news about the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) environmental education grants, up to \$250,000, available for lead education and related environmental issues, and she will circulate the link.
- **Update on Healthy Homes for Healthy Kids Program and Grant Coordination** Dr. Clifford Mitchell, Bureau Director for the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and Commissioner gave an update on the Healthy Homes for Healthy Kids program, noting active outreach and discussing the challenge of coordinating messaging between similar, overlapping, but non-identical loan programs in state (DHC), Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Cambridge, all of which have separate performance goals. Commissioner Dr. Mitchell also flagged a large multi-million dollar federal grant for rural transformation of health care, which will bring a significant focus on addressing the complexity of this program in rural communities.
- **Baltimore City's Lead Grant Program Success:** Katherine Taylor, Director of the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development (BC-DHCD) Lead Hazard Reduction Program provided an update on their Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant program, noting they have exceeded most of their goals and anticipate a new award of \$4.1 million, which would bring the city's total federal funding opportunity to \$9 million. Ms. Taylor indicated that their greatest challenge is contractor capacity, which they are addressing through outreach campaigns.
- **Lead Program Marketing and Information Sharing** Nicola Tran, Director of Housing and Building Energy Programs for the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and Commissioner shared that their department is developing a general lead marketing campaign for their three lead programs, aiming for a unified message and application process. Chair Norton suggested the need for a common dashboard of available resources and recommended convening communications

officers from all programs to coordinate marketing efforts. Commissioner Tran, Ms. Taylor, Thelonious Williams, Healthy Homes Program Administrator for MDH, A.C. Alrey - City of Cambridge, and Adonna Patterson from MDH, volunteered to participate in a strategy subgroup for rural communities and marketing.

- **Geographic Analysis of Lead Issues:** Commissioner Dr. Mitchell proposed a conversation between DHCD, MDE, MDH to use lead testing data and the lead registry to map opportunities, especially in underserved rural communities. Commissioner Dr. Mitchell confirmed that the mapping data is already publicly available on the Department of Health's Environmental Public Health Tracking portal, with census tract level data on children with elevated blood lead levels.
- **Budget Update and Public Meeting Location:** Commissioner Banks reported two approved fee increases: one for lead-free certificate fees and another for lead rental registration fees. He also mentioned that the water administration was approved for federal funding for lead replacement lines. Chair Norton sought input on holding a public meeting in June outside of the usual conference room, with potential suggestions including the Eastern Shore (Cambridge) and Western Maryland (Cumberland or Hagerstown), based on higher rates of elevated blood lead levels.
- **Formation of Housing Subcommittee and MDE Legal Update:** Commissioner Kleinhammer successfully proposed a motion to establish a subcommittee for housing concerns, based on the strategic plan. Commissioner Banks provided an update on the sentencing hearing for Green Environmental, noting the judge agreed to 5 years of suspended probation. Commissioner Tran announced an open program manager position for their HUD program, encouraging referrals. Mr. Connor asked if the Baltimore City Health Department had provided redacted environmental investigations for commission review, and Commissioner Banks agreed to follow up on this request.
- **Addressing Non-Responsive Property Owners and Title Notification** Mr. Connor raised a question about mechanisms for the department to address property owners who fail to respond within 30 days to bring their property into compliance following inspection certificate invalidation, specifically suggesting the possibility of tagging a title or deed. Commissioner Banks confirmed that the state is currently not taking advantage of the opportunity to tag a lien but noted that they are working with ESTA to receive updates on changes in ownership, which are currently not being adequately reported by property owners. Commissioner Norton emphasized that slowing title clearance would be a significant incentive for compliance and requested that the state provide reasons at the next meeting as to why this action is not occurring.
- **Collaboration with EPA on Lead Disclosure Enforcement** Mr. Connor inquired if the department is collaborating with the EPA for referrals to enforce Section 1018 of the real estate disclosure act, concerning invalidated lead-free certificates and the potential voiding of required federal real estate disclosures due to owners utilizing the Maryland 330 form exemption. Chair Norton acknowledged that this is a "quite a smart idea" given recent EPA enforcement actions and proposed convening with both EPA and HUD regarding this matter as a potential plan of action.
- **Status of the Annual Report to the Governor:** Commissioner Kleinhammer inquired about the status of the annual report to the governor, which is typically due at the beginning of the year. Commissioner Banks clarified that the report is currently pending approval in the secretary's office.

### **Adjournment:**

The Commission meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.

2026 Maryland General Assembly Lead & Related Legislation Last Updated 3.4.2026

Bill Number	Bill Title	Sponsor(s)	Bill Synopsis	Hearing Schedule	Status
<u><a href="#">HB196 / SB570</a></u>	Public Health - Baby Food Testing - Definition of Baby Food	Delegate <b>Taveras</b>  Senator <b>Ellis</b>	Altering the definition of "baby food" for purposes of certain provisions of law governing baby food testing to include, rather than exclude, infant formula and to include infant cereal; and altering the defined term "toxic heavy metal" to be "toxic element" for purposes of certain provisions of law governing baby food testing.	Heard in House Health on 2/04 and Senate Finance on 2/25. Nothing scheduled currently.	<b>Awaiting second reading in House Health and Senate Finance.</b>
<u><a href="#">HB252 / SB203</a></u>	Environment – Lead Paint Abatement Services – Performance Bond and Liability Insurance	Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee ( <b>By Request - Departmental - Environment</b> )  Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee ( <b>By Request - Departmental - Environment</b> )	Authorizing regulations adopted by the Department of the Environment to include requirements for any person who is accredited by the Department to provide lead paint abatement services to be covered by a reasonable performance bond or reasonable liability insurance.	Heard in House E&T on 2/11 and Senate EEE on 2/03. Nothing scheduled currently.	Favorable Report by House E&T ( <u><a href="#">13Y-3N-0AN-3E-0AT</a></u> ). <b>Awaiting House third reading.</b> No amendments.  Favorable Report by Senate EEE ( <u><a href="#">11Y-0N-0AN-0E-0AT</a></u> ). Passed third reading in Senate ( <u><a href="#">43Y-0N-0NV-0E-0AT</a></u> ). No amendments.
<u><a href="#">HB 315 / SB 335</a></u>	Human Relations - Discrimination in Housing - Income-Based Housing Subsidies	Delegate Stewart  Senators <b>Love</b> , Charles, Henson, Hettleman, Lam, Muse, and Sydnor	Providing that a certain landlord may not refuse to rent to a prospective tenant who pays rent with the assistance of an income-based housing subsidy under certain circumstances; providing that a certain landlord may collect financial information from a prospective tenant under certain circumstances; and providing that a violation of the Act is a discriminatory housing practice and is subject to enforcement by the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights.	Heard in House ECM on 2/05 and Senate JPR on 2/10. Nothing currently scheduled.	<b>Awaiting second reading on House ECM and Senate JPR.</b>
<u><a href="#">HB1067 / SB181</a></u> <i>(Not currently</i>	Hunting - Lead and Lead-Based	Delegates <b>Guyton</b> and <b>Allen</b>  Senator <b>Lewis Young</b>	Requiring the Department of Natural Resources to require, through a certain phasing-out process, the use of nonlead ammunition for the hunting of all game species on or before July 1, 2029; and requiring the Department to authorize the	Heard in House E&T on 3/04 and Senate EEE on 2/03. Nothing	<b>Awaiting second reading in House E&amp;T and Senate EEE.</b>

**2026 Maryland General Assembly Lead & Related Legislation** Last Updated 3.4.2026

<i>listed as cross-files on MGA)</i>	Ammunition - Phase-Out		use of lead ammunition for muzzleloaders, handguns, rifles, and shotguns if nonlead ammunition is not commercially available for the specific firearm.	scheduled currently.	
<b><u>HB1547 / SB873</u></b>	Environment - Reduction of Lead Risk in Housing - Modified Risk Reduction Standard	Delegate <b>Rosenberg</b> Senator <b>M. Washington</b>	Altering the conditions under which an owner of affected property is required to satisfy the modified risk reduction standard under the Reduction of Lead Risk in Housing law by repealing a requirement that an environmental investigation conclude that there is a defect at the affected property.	<b>Hearing in House ECM on 3/13.</b> Heard in Senate EEE on 3/03.	Awaiting hearing in House ECM.  <b>Awaiting second reading in Senate EEE.</b>
<b><u>HB1549 / SB872</u></b>	Reduction of Lead Risk in Housing - Rental Dwelling Unit - Definition	Delegate <b>Rosenberg</b> Senator <b>M. Washington</b>	Altering the definition of "rental dwelling unit" for purposes of provisions of law governing the reduction of lead risk in housing.	<b>Hearing in House ECM on 3/13.</b> Heard in Senate EEE on 3/03.	Awaiting hearing in House ECM.  <b>Awaiting second reading in Senate EEE.</b>
<b><u>HB 59</u></b>	Real Property - Expedited Wrongful Detainer Proceedings - Property for Sale or Lease	Delegate <b>Addison</b>	Requiring certain expedited proceedings in a wrongful detainer action if the property that is the subject of the action is, at the time of the complaint, advertised or listed for sale or lease by the complainant and requiring that notice of a hearing or appeal be served in person or, under certain circumstances, posted conspicuously on the property; requiring the District Court or the circuit court to issue a warrant within 24 hours if the court rules in favor of the complainant in an expedited wrongful detainer action; etc.	Heard in House ECM on 2/26. Nothing currently scheduled.	<b>Awaiting second reading in House ECM.</b>
<b><u>SB635</u></b>	Residential Real Property - Notice of Landlord Entry - Tenant Consent	Senator <b>Waldstreicher</b>	Authorizing a landlord to enter a leased premises without providing certain written notice on written request of a tenant to complete a repair or perform maintenance within 7 days after the tenant's request or if a repair is in progress and is being completed in a timely manner.	Heard in Senate JPR on 2/19. Nothing currently scheduled.	<b>Awaiting second reading in Senate JPR.</b>

# **Maryland Lead Poisoning Prevention Commission**

## **EPA Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI) - Update**

March 5, 2026

# Reducing Lead Exposure

- **EPA Strategy to Reduce Lead Exposures and Disparities in U.S. Communities (2022)**  
Revising strategies and standards to reduce lead exposure including: lead in dust standards (2023) and lead in soil guidance standards (2024).
- EPA: “The science is clear: There is no known safe blood lead level in children.”

# EPA Lead and Copper Rule

## **Lead and Copper Rule (1991)**

### **National Lead and Drinking Water Regulation**

- Requires public water systems to reduce levels of lead in drinking water

## **Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (2021)**

- **In January 2021**, EPA released the 2021 Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR)

## **Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (2024)**

- In **October 2024**, EPA released the 2024 Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI)
- 2024 LCRI supersedes the 2021 LCRR

# EPA Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI)(2024)

## Action Taken

- Water systems must still meet local lead service line inventory reporting requirements by October 2024
- Water systems must submit Lead Service Line Replacement Plans to the States by November 1, 2027
- Requires water systems to replace lead service lines within 10 years by 2037
- Lowers Lead in Water Action Level requiring action to 10 ppb
- Requires water systems that have multiple testing levels that exceed the lead in water action level to implement adjustments to treatment measures to reduce lead in water

Lead in Water Action Level	Prior Standard	New 2024 Standard
Lead in Water Action Level for Public Water Systems	15 ppb	10 ppb

# EPA Lead and Copper Rule Standards (LCRI)

## Deferred Deadlines

- **EPA established mechanism for a small number of drinking water systems in the US with an unusually high proportion of lead services lines to be eligible for additional time to replace all lead service lines**
- Complete calculation of lead services needing replacement within 10 year period
- If eligible, include deferred deadline and justification in Lead Service Line Replacement Plan
- EPA estimates that 1% of water systems will be eligible for deferred deadline

# EPA Lead and Copper Rule Improvements Final Rule - Lawsuit filed in US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit

## **American Water Works Association vs. EPA (2025)**

- Industry challenging the ability of water systems to complete the replacement of lead service lines within 10 years
- Industry raises issue of access and control over service lines owned by third parties
- EPA states that 10 year deadline to replace lead service lines is feasible
- *Note: EPA estimate has lowered to 4 million its projection of the number of lead services remaining to be replaced in the US*
- Public health stakeholders, states, and Green & Healthy Homes Initiative filing multiple Amicus Briefs in support of the EPA's Lead and Copper Rule Improvements Final Rule and opposing a delay in meeting the 10 year deadline

# EPA Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI)

## Funding for Lead Service Line Replacement Programs

- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)  
**\$15 billion** for lead service line replacement activities
- Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (DWSRF)
- Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN)
- Water Infrastructure Finance Innovation Act (WIFIA)  
EPA Technical Assistance

## EPA Guidance Documents

### **EPA October 2024 Lead and Copper Rule Announcement**

<https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/lead-and-copper-rule-improvements>

### **EPA October 8, 2024 Final Rule**

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/10/30/2024-23549/national-primary-drinking-water-regulations-for-lead-and-copper-improvements-lcri>

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)



[Environment](#) by [Fern Shen](#) 12:15 pm Mar 3, 2026

## Two more Baltimore-area bridges confirmed to be shedding lead paint flakes

Chips from an I-95 overpass in Baltimore County, as well as the Orleans Street Viaduct in the city, test positive for lead, says Blue Water Baltimore; Meanwhile the state says it won't test Baltimore's second lead-tainted bridge, now leaving it to the city

Above: Orange paint chips containing high levels of lead in the Baltimore County community of Halethorpe near an I-95 overpass. Seen at left (zoom in on the grass) and under the highway along Arbutus Avenue. (Barbara Johnson, Blue Water Baltimore)

- [Share on Facebook](#)
- [Share on Twitter](#)
- [Email this article](#)
- [Print this article](#)

New test results show high lead levels in flaking paint at two more bridges – one in Baltimore city (an overpass above I-83 and Guilford Avenue, the Orleans Viaduct) and the other in Baltimore County's Halethorpe community (an I-95 overpass above Arbutus Avenue near the intersection with Potomac Avenue).

News of these potential public health threats, however, doesn't come from state environmental or health officials, but from the watchdog environmental group Blue Water Baltimore, which had chips from the two locations tested at an independent

laboratory.

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), *The Brew* has learned, doesn't plan to test the paint falling from the Orleans Viaduct onto a city street – even though last month it *did* perform testing on paint falling from another city structure, Baltimore's 28th Street Bridge.

“We're asking the city to do its own testing,” MDE spokesman Jay Apperson said.

Asked why, Apperson replied, “It's their bridge.”

The 28th Street bridge findings had been startling.

Alerted by *The Brew* and Blue Water Baltimore, MDE inspected and found the orange-and-white chips floating in the Jones Falls and scattered across a biking and running trail, contain lead at 36 times the standard threshold level. The agency determined the city was in violation of state pollution laws.

(The findings also proved embarrassing: informed about the falling flakes by *The Brew*, a city DOT spokeswoman had initially dismissed the matter, saying there was no lead paint on this bridge and that there were “no lead paint concerns.”)

Pulverized lead paint bits, carried on shoes or pets' paws and introduced into a home, could place a child who ingests them at risk of the well-known effects of lead paint poisoning – damage to the brain and nervous system.

Asked what was different with this second flaking city-owned bridge, which has been dropping chips on a public street and sidewalk, Apperson had no comment.

Blue Water Baltimore, concerned about the potential environmental and public health threat, tested the 28th Street Bridge chips that were raining down on the Jones Falls and Falls Road and, like MDE, found high lead levels in them.

The group has also tested flakes reported directly to them by the public, resulting so far in these two new confirmed locations:

- Orleans Street overpass/bridge: **27,300 mg/kg lead**
- I-95 overpass: **45,700 mg/kg lead**

“Both bridges are shedding paint with hazardous levels of lead, and the paint also contains PCBs” – Alice Volpitta, Blue Water Baltimore.

“Both bridges are shedding paint with hazardous levels of lead, and the paint also contains PCBs,” Blue Water Baltimore's Baltimore Harbor Waterkeeper Alice Volpitta said, in an email.

She noted that the standard threshold for lead paint is **5,000 mg/kg**. This means the Orleans Street bridge flakes are more than five times the threshold and the I-95 overpass flakes are nine times the threshold.

The group is checking out another reported location at Falls Road and Clipper Mill Road.



Peeling paint on Baltimore's Orleans Street overpass is falling onto Guilford Avenue near Bath Street. **BELOW:** A close-up of the flakes in the grass next to the sidewalk. (Fern Shen)



## No State Testing Planned

As with the earlier 28th Street inspection, MDE's Feb. 18 inspection of the flakes falling from the Orleans Street Viaduct resulted in a pollution violation.

There was no press release, but a publicly available inspection report noted that the location was within 1,000 feet of the Jones Falls and that paint flakes were found in Guilford Avenue and Bath Street storm drains.

Instead of providing test results, the report said this:

“Orange paint chips (which are consistent in appearance with the paint from the West 28th Street overpass at Jones Falls known to contain lead as verified by laboratory analysis) are in a position likely to pollute waters of the State via storm drain inlets.”

As with the 28th Street bridge case, MDE said Baltimore was subject to a fine (without specifying the amount) and ordered the city to “remove all paint chips from the ground and storm drain inlets.”

But in this instance, Baltimore was instructed to “manage the material as hazardous waste” unless it can submit test results “showing the absence of lead to MDE.”

City transportation officials – asked by *The Brew* if they will test the paint flakes from the Orleans overpass and what other actions they plan to take to safeguard the public – have not responded.

Neither city nor state officials indicate they have any plan to proactively survey bridges to identify any that may be shedding lead paint flakes.

Asked also if there are plans to proactively survey bridges in Baltimore or elsewhere in Maryland to identify flaking lead paint, neither city nor state officials have indicated they plan to do so.

• **How Connecticut handled the release of lead paint flakes from its bridges** (2/24/26)

It’s a stark contrast from what happened in Connecticut in the winter of 2023, when “thermal shock resulting from the extreme temperature changes” caused a sudden shedding of lead paint from bridges across the state.

“In mid-February 2023, CT Department of Transportation inspectors reported seeing paint chips deposited beneath an elevated section of I-84 in Hartford. A comprehensive look at all of DOT’s painted steel bridges was completed over the ensuing days,” according to a description of the state response by the Connecticut governor’s office.

“Fallen paint chips were observed state-wide at 281 bridge sites. Preliminary testing confirmed that the paint chips contained lead,” the document said. “On February 17, 2023, DOT Commissioner Garrett Eucalitto declared a statewide emergency condition that needed immediate attention to ensure the safety of the public.”

Officials explained to the public that while lead-based paint was banned in the U.S. for residential uses in 1978, its use for bridges and industrial structures was allowed for many years after that.



Orange lead paint flakes along Arbutus Avenue below the I-95 overpass. (Barbara Johnson, Blue Water Baltimore)

## Who's Responsible?

Asked whether MDE plans to test paint flakes falling on the Halethorpe community, MDE has not responded.

---

**UPDATE** received from MDE after publication:

"We are aware of the Blue Water Baltimore lab results," spokesman Jay Apperson said. "We are investigating the Arbutus [Avenue] site. We believe the bridge is owned by SHA."

---

If testing confirmed high lead levels, could the state itself be found in violation, presuming the overpass is owned and maintained by a state agency – the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) or the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration?

MDE has not answered that question either.

Neither city nor state health officials have released statements or advisories about the health risks of the falling flakes.

Blue Water Baltimore's Barbara Johnson, who collected the flake samples in Halethorpe, said she spotted them not just around the railroad tracks near the MARC station, but on the roadway and grass along Arbutus Avenue, as well as residential areas around Potomac Avenue.

[View Comments /](#)

- [Share on Facebook](#)
- [Share on Twitter](#)
- [Email this article](#)
- [Print this article](#)

## Most Popular

**Baltimore residents demand reimbursement for “nauseating” sewage backups**

**Despite months of complaints, a garbage pile on city-owned property near the Jones Falls remains**

**Annapolis lawmakers introduce bill to clarify right of inspectors general to obtain documents**

**Remembering Baltimore Mayor McKeldin, an extinct species: the moderate-to-liberal Republican**

**Two more Baltimore-area bridges confirmed to be shedding lead paint flakes**

## More News

[Environment](#) Mar 2, 2026

**Despite months of complaints, a garbage pile on city-owned property near the Jones Falls remains**

[There it sits, easily visible from Falls Road, amid 311 complaints, environmental concerns and irate emails to top Scott administration officials – plus questions as to why Baltimore City trucks, as well as private haulers, are dumping there.](#)  
[Environment](#) Feb 27, 2026

# Baltimore residents demand reimbursement for “nauseating” sewage backups

Drawing attention to a long-term, systemic problem that ends with raw sewage bubbling up in residents’ basements.

**SUPPORT BALTIMORE BREW TODAY!**

*Your membership sustains independent journalism in Baltimore. >*

[Please read our moderation policy before leaving a comment.](#)

0 Ratings

★★★★★ 0.0

1 Comment

 Login ▾

Rate and comment ★★★★★

G

Join the discussion...

LOG IN WITH

OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS 

Name



Share

Best Newest Oldest



**Localboydoesgood**

a day ago

Did you know they still use lead paint in two places, bridges and military bases... Go figure. Do some bridge painting companies cheat with subpar paint? Apparently, one bridge painting company just fled Baltimore City in 2024.

o o Reply Share >

[Subscribe](#)

[Privacy](#)

[Do Not Sell My Data](#)

- [Front Page](#)
- [Special Series](#)
- [The Drip](#)
  
- [Accountability](#)
- [Business & Development](#)
- [Commentary](#)
- [Crime & Justice](#)
- [Culture & Arts](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Media & Technology](#)
- [Neighborhoods](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [The Drip](#)

THE BALTIMORE BANNER

# State cites Baltimore over lead-contaminated orange paint chips falling from city bridge

Darreonna Davis

2/20/2026 8:48 p.m. EST



A detail showing paint chips on the ground under the West 28th Street overpass. (Maryland Department of the Environment)

[Subscribe for \\$1](#)

State investigators determined that chunks of orange paint scattered in the waters of the Jones Falls and along the trail are contaminated with lead and issued a violation against Baltimore City, officials said.

Investigators spent nearly an hour under the West 28th Street overpass observing the orange paint chips on Feb. 6, according to a report from the Maryland Department of the Environment. Lab results show the paint chips contained levels of lead far above the safety standard, according to MDE.

The paint chips are believed to be from the West 28th Street bridge, which opened in 1961 after years of construction, per local newspaper archives. In the report, officials urged Baltimore City to remove the paint chips from the ground and stream and manage it as hazardous waste.

The state found Baltimore City in violation of the Maryland Environment Article Title 9 and warned of thousands of dollars in potential penalties — potentially for each day the violation continues.

“We will follow up to ensure that the environment and public health are protected,” Jay Apperson, an MDE spokesperson, said in an email.

MDE was pushed to investigate the matter after The Baltimore Brew alerted them and Blue Water Baltimore, a water quality and safety nonprofit, while reporting a story on it.



The paint chips are believed to be from the West 28th Street bridge. (Maryland Department of the Environment)

Blue Water Baltimore commissioned independent testing that showed the orange chunks of paint exceeded the standard for safety and contained [polychlorinated biphenyls \(PCBs\)](#). The group is also testing chips falling from the Orleans Street bridge over Guilford Avenue.

“Lead paint is literally raining down on our residents and landscape, and it needs to be treated as the serious emergency it is,” [Alice Volpitta, the Baltimore Harbor waterkeeper with Blue Water Baltimore](#), said in a news release. “The fact that the City didn’t know that this is lead-based paint is outrageous.”

Kathy Dominick, a spokesperson for the city’s Department of Transportation, said in an email they are working with state agencies to establish an action plan to address the situation

[Subscribe for \\$1](#)



Orange paint chips can be seen on the ground by the edge of the snow, along a property fence on Falls Road. (Maryland Department of the Environment)

The Environmental Protection Agency notes that exposure to [lead can negatively impact every organ and system in the body](#), posing several health risks for people, such as increased blood pressure and hypertension, decreased kidney function and reproductive issues. PCBs also pose endocrine, immune, neurological and reproductive health risks, according to the EPA. Blue Water Baltimore notes it PCBs could enter the food chain and end up in seafood.

---

## Darreonna Davis

darreonna.davis@thebaltimorebanner.com



Darreonna Davis is an express desk reporter at The Baltimore Banner. She previously reported at the intersection of gender, politics, health and economic policy as a fellow for the 19th News.



---

### MORE FROM DARREONNA DAVIS

#### **Dave Matthews Band, Gwen Stefani among performers at Oceans Calling 2026**

Mar 3, 2026

#### **Man dies after being struck by MTA train in Baltimore**

Mar 3, 2026

[Subscribe for \\$1](#)