

EPA will spend \$5.8 billion to help clean up U.S. drinking water

February 20 2024, by Robin Foster



Nearly \$6 billion in funding will soon be spread through every U.S. state and territory as part of a massive, ongoing effort to clean up the nation's water supply, the Biden Administration announced Tuesday.

[EPA Administrator Michael Regan](#) and [Vice President Kamala Harris](#) will travel to Pittsburgh on Tuesday to announce the latest infusion of [funding](#), the White House said in a [news release](#).

Projects underway in that city — including efforts to remove lead water pipes—are among several across the country that are being funded through bipartisan [legislation](#) passed in 2021 that devoted \$50 billion to improving the nation's water supply.

"With \$50 billion in total, the largest investment in [water infrastructure](#) in our nation's history, EPA will enable communities across the nation to ensure safer drinking water for their residents and rebuild vital clean water infrastructure to protect public health for decades to come," Regan said in an agency [news release](#).

Instead of choosing which projects to fund, the [federal government](#) will deliver the money to states, territories and tribes through the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs, the EPA said.

Many of the country's water infrastructure problems stem from a general lack of investment, according to the EPA.

Local governments typically can't afford to update [water systems](#) on their own. Even when changes are made, that can still prompt crises like the one in [Flint, Mich.](#), where scientists learned residents had high blood lead levels due to corroded pipes from a new drinking water source.

New lead pipes have been banned in the United States since the 1980s, but the EPA [estimates](#) there are still at least 9.2 million lead service lines carrying water to American homes.

The funding announced Tuesday will be used to clean drinking water,

improve wastewater and sanitation and remove contaminants, and it will also be used to replace lead pipes, the EPA said.

Over \$1 billion from the latest round of funding will help cities and states clean up another toxin in Americans' drinking water: PFAS, "forever" chemicals that are considered dangerous to human health, *CNN* reported.

Almost half of the tap water in the United States is contaminated with PFAS, according to a [study](#) published in 2023.

PFAS exposure is linked to problems like cancer, obesity, thyroid disease, high cholesterol, decreased fertility, liver damage and hormone suppression, [according to the EPA](#).

In June 2022, the EPA [issued health advisories](#) that said the chemicals are much more hazardous to human health than scientists first thought.

This month, the EPA [proposed](#) labeling nine of the PFAS chemicals as hazardous. If the agency officially makes the change, it will be easier for the government to address PFAS as a part of its cleanup program, *CNN* reported.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about [clean drinking water](#).

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