

## **MEJC applauds Rep. Tlaib and Rep. Dingell for their leadership on advocating for clean water investments in Michigan and around the country**

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Over the course of two days, Representative Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) visited communities across Michigan alongside federal officials and community partners, including Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition (MEJC) and People's Waterboard Coalition, to highlight water issues in our state. The Congressional "Water Tour" visited communities that continue to face systemic barriers to safe and affordable drinking water including Detroit, Flint, Benton Harbor, Pontiac, Hamtramck, Highland Park, and Dearborn Heights. During the tour, elected officials met with organizers, affected community members, and union workers to learn more about this issue.

With one of the [highest rates of lead](#) drinking water pipes per capita in the nation, clean water is a central concern for Michiganders, especially in low-income communities and communities of color. While the Flint Water Crisis brought national attention to the issue of aging water infrastructure and led to passage of [Michigan's Lead and Copper Rule](#) in 2018, the removal of lead service lines across the state is still an on-going issue in Michigan and around the country. To address this nationwide crisis, Rep. Tlaib and Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI) are leading efforts in the House of Representatives through the newly-formed, bipartisan "Get the Lead Out" Caucus, which they founded and co-chair.

Sylvia Orduño of the People's Water Board Coalition and the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization said, "It was important to visit and hear from residents about their concerns with lead in drinking water and problems with water and wastewater affordability. Representative Tlaib's tour offered a unique opportunity for many former Emergency Manager communities to convey their long-standing concerns with lead pipes and outdated infrastructure. These concerns overlap with those of environmental justice communities that need fully funded and expedited removal of lead services lines and household fixtures by local and state officials."

Juan Jhong Chung of Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition notes "President Biden's Infrastructure, Investments, and Jobs Act (IIJA) included \$15 billion for lead service line replacements. This is not nearly enough! We need an additional \$45 billion to replace all lead pipes in the country. We need these investments to prevent further public health problems and to create jobs that build resilient water infrastructure. This is crucial because the impacts of lead pipes are not evenly distributed and disproportionately affect communities of color and low-income peoples."