



**SIERRA CLUB**  
JOHN MUIR CHAPTER

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Community Members remind us of the Dangers of Lead Poisoning** *This is a problem right here in Racine*

Racine —Today citizens gathered to highlight the issues with lead contamination in drinking water here in Racine and statewide. Speakers Mike Kosterman, City of Racine Water Utility; Sarah Clemens, City of Racine, Department of Public Health; Gregory S Vogel, Program Manager/Risk Assessor at Kenosha/Racine Lead-Free Communities Partnership and Melissa Warner discussed the prevalence and dangers of lead in drinking water. The Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter released *Lead Contamination in Wisconsin*, a white paper on the lead contamination of drinking water in Racine and around Wisconsin including policy recommendations to correct the problem.

“It is a sad truth that in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century we are still talking about our children’s exposure to lead, yet here we are,” said **Melissa Warner of the Sierra Club**. “Addressing lead pipes is a common sense step to remove the threat of lead poisoning of our children.”

Right now, thousands of children across Wisconsin are being exposed to toxic lead when they drink a glass of water at home or use drinking fountains at school, places of worship, and parks including here in Racine. In 2014 6.2 percent of children tested in the City of Racine had elevated blood lead levels. By comparison, the rate in Flint, MI was 4.9 percent.

“People need to understand that lead poisoning is preventable. Ask yourself, was our house built before 1978 and do you have any chipping or peeling paint? If the answer is yes, you should have your children tested,” said **Gregory Vogel, Kenosha Racine Leadfree Community Partnership**.

There are several bills that have been introduced in the legislature that if passed would help address this serious issue and protect our children from future harm. For example, Senate Bill 48 would create a funding mechanism to provide resources to pay for the removal of lead pipes. Wisconsinites must speak out and speak loudly that we want to protect our children from lead poisoning. More information is available in the white paper.

The Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter will release three additional white papers in the next two months related to water concerns like factory farms and water quantity issues in Wisconsin.

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*Founded in 1892 by John Muir, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. The Sierra Club’s mission is to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth. The Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter is made up of 15,000 members and supporters working to promote clean energy and protect water resources in Wisconsin.*