

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 18, 2017

The Honorable Carmen Fariña  
Tweed Courthouse  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chancellor Fariña:

We were disturbed to learn that 83 percent of New York City school buildings had at least one fixture with lead levels above 15 parts per billion, including some drinking fountains. In some schools, levels were more than double the allowable limits. While we commend the city for retesting all schools without flushing pipes, as had been the city's previous practice, we are deeply concerned about these results.

As you know, exposure to lead can have devastating consequences for young children, including damage to the central and peripheral nervous system, learning disabilities, shorter stature, impaired hearing, and impaired formation and function of blood cells. That is why it is critical we not only inform parents of any lead risk, but make sure to fix the problem.

We were pleased to see that you took swift action by turning off any outlets where the sample exceeded 15 parts per billion and have made plans to replace any fixtures. Unfortunately, fixtures are not always the source of the problem and lead concentrations in water are not static. Rather, pipes and plumbing could be the cause of lead leaching into the water. Moreover, water acidity and alkalinity, temperature, and other factors all determine the extent to which lead enters the water. According to Marc Edwards, the Virginia Tech professor who helped uncover the water crisis in Flint, "A tap that tested good today, can dispense dangerous levels of lead tomorrow, as long as lead is in the plumbing." Thus, it is critical that you not only continue to test water in schools, but also determine the source of lead contamination.

Additionally, the American Academy of Pediatrics has suggested that drinking fountains in schools should not have lead concentrations of more than 1 part per billion. While we understand you are only required to follow federal guidelines, parents and pediatricians should be aware of the exact levels of lead in the water so that they can make informed decisions.

We strongly urge you to continue testing, and sharing detailed information with schools and families, not only on school websites, but on the "Water Safety Portal." As you work to keep communities informed, please ensure that this information is easily accessible and available in not only English, but the many languages spoken in our diverse city.

Finally, we hope to be your partner in working to ensure schools provide a safe and enriching environment for children. That is why we ask that you inform us of the resources you need to adequately fix our city schools. You took an important step in retesting all schools and

informing communities of the results. While we are alarmed by the findings, we look forward to working with you to rebuild our schools and keep our children's drinking water safe.

Sincerely,



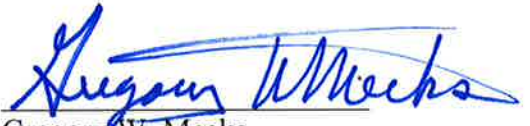
Nydia Velázquez  
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



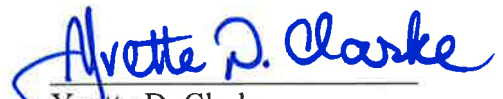
Hakeem Jeffries  
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks  
Member of Congress



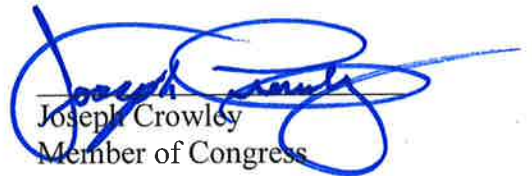
Grace Meng  
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



Eliot L. Engel  
Member of Congress



Joseph Crowley  
Member of Congress



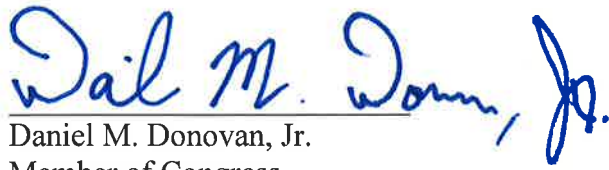
Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress



José E. Serrano  
Member of Congress

Handwritten signature of Daniel M. Donovan, Jr. in blue ink.

Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.  
Member of Congress