

AB 496 (Rendon)

Water in Schools

Issue

Recent studies show unsafe drinking water plagues school water systems at a startling rate. Some schools sealed pipes and turned off drinking water sources due to lead piping and other water system contaminants. As a result, children in our most underserved communities suffer.

Limited funding and a growing list of needs to repair school infrastructure causes clean drinking water to fall to the wayside. School districts may be unaware of various State and federal funding streams available to them. Districts need a one-stop shop where information and funding is available for clean drinking water programs.

Background

Even if water from a local utility is clean, contamination happens as chemicals such as copper, lead, and arsenic seep into water supplies from school facilities. Water served in cafeterias or school water fountains may contain these harmful chemicals.

Existing law requires school districts to provide free, fresh drinking water to students at meal times. (SB 1413 Leno-2010) This bill gives school districts additional resources to comply with State law and to provide safe drinking water to students all day.

Now is the time to invest in the health of our kids and in the integrity of water systems. Voter-approved Proposition 1 shows that California is ready improve water quality and infrastructure across the State.

Legislation

AB 496 charges the California Department of Education (CDE) with developing a one-stop shop for school districts to find information and funding for water quality and water facilities improvements.

In conjunction with the State Water Resources Control Board, Department of Water Resources and the Department of Public Health, this bill authorizes CDE to receive funds transferred from State and federal sources. CDE may then allocate monies to eligible school districts for water quality improvement.

Support

Community Water Center
Clean Water Action
Leadership Counsel for Justice and
Accountability
California Food Policy Advocates
Mission: Readiness

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