

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Patricia A. Marida, Chair
1710 Dorsetshire Road
Columbus, OH 43229

Re: Project XL

It is important for all the stakeholders to have input into the meetings. The stakeholder process needs to be reflective of the most at-risk community. Therefore, people from the inner city should be there. This would mean including neighborhood associations, churches, religious groups and neighborhood health-care centers representing that population, among others.

The vast majority of poisoned children are exposed to lead in their homes related to peeling lead-based paint and dust. Focusing attention and resources at this source and pathway therefore buys more health protection than tinkering with drinking water at the margins.

However, children already exposed to lead in older homes are most at risk for a double dose of lead in the water. Therefore, REAL education is of the essence—making sure that the most at-risk population knows about paint and first flush. This would include pregnant women, nursing mothers and children. Physicians such as gynecologists, obstetricians, and pediatricians, as well as general practitioners, need to be aware of at-risk patients and how to educate them properly about lead exposure.

What is vital, also, is how the money is being spent. All too often, it is directed to "education" (i.e., trying to change parents' day-to-day behavior) instead of source control (making kids home safe in the first place). While education is prominently mentioned in this proposal, Project XL does seem to be hitting other important bases. Also, notably, their education efforts extend beyond parents to teaching painters and landlords how to work with lead paint safely.

Has the city considered enacting minimum standards for paint in older homes? Landlords need to be responsible, and the city should use the money saved from meeting service line compliance to give assistance to low-income families to accomplish the needed work. Inspection teams need to be hired.

The city should work to develop a plan to protect the drinking water from all contaminants. This critical to the public health. Columbus needs to eliminate ALL drinking water contaminants, including pesticides and the myriad of chlorinated organics that result from the chlorination process, which includes trihalomethanes (THM's).. This is best accomplished by using activated carbon, versus using ferric chloride which acidifies the water, draws out lead, and does nothing to reduce pesticide levels. Columbus Division of Water should use this as an opportunity to be more aggressive in protecting public health.

Information in Rachel's Environment & Health Weekly (www.rachel.org) #687,688, and 689 is sobering and shows that lead can be a slow poison even at levels of 5 mcg/dl.