

PSC: Approves first customer-side lead service line replacement program

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Kenosha is the first public water utility to create a program

Madison – Today, the Public Service Commission (PSC) approved the state's first application to implement a new customer-side lead service line replacement program. The program, outlined in 2017 Wisconsin Act 137, creates new a process by which a public water utility may provide a grant or loan to a property owner, to assist with the replacement of a lead-containing water service line.

This new program allows the use of utility rate revenue to assist customers in paying for the replacement of customer-owned lead service lines. While the replacement of most utility-owned infrastructure containing lead generally does not require approval from the PSC, providing financial assistance to help customers replace their side of lead service lines does.

"Safe drinking water is of the utmost importance to Wisconsinites, and we must do all we can to grant our local governments and utilities the tools they need to provide adequate services to their customers," said PSC Chairman Lon Roberts.

"Challenging issues like lead service line replacement will take time to address. I am happy to see municipalities begin to make use of this new tool, and I look forward to a continued collaborative effort between water utilities, customers, the PSC, and various other stakeholders to eradicate lead from service lines."

It is currently estimated that 112 of Wisconsin's 578 drinking water utilities still have utility-owned service lines that contain lead, and it's likely that an even greater number of water systems have customer-side service lines that contain lead. The Kenosha Water Utility has indicated that it plans to start construction in the near future. Kenosha is charged with reporting back to the PSC on the financial

health of the program in the form of a rate adjustment in two years.

For utilities interested in applying for PSC approval of customer-owned lead service line replacement programs, please visit the PSC web page: <https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/-ForUtilities/Water/Lead-Service-Line.aspx>. Here, utilities can find useful information on how they may provide financial assistance, as well as a checklist for utilities who are interested in implementing a new program.

It is recommended that utilities looking to implement a customer-side lead service line replacement program, schedule a pre-application meeting with PSC staff to ensure certain requirements are met.