

POSITION PAPER: LEAD IN PLUMBING PRODUCTS

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The American Supply Association Opposes Ban on Lead in Plumbing Products.

ASA opposes state and federal initiatives to reduce the lead content in plumbing products to such restrictive levels that manufacturers will not be able to comply. Further, ASA opposes state and federal standards with aggressive deadlines that do not allow for the normal turnover of existing inventories.

Discussion

State and federal proposals would reduce the lead content in plumbing fixtures.

- In California, AB 1953, passed in 2006, mandates ultra-low lead levels in the manufacture of plumbing products by 2010. Plumbing manufacturers at present know of no way to mass-produce faucets and fittings with the requisite purity and at reasonable prices.
- At the federal level, pending legislation would prohibit within five years the sale of any pipe, or pipe or plumbing fitting or fixture with a lead content of more than 2 percent.

Proponents of lead-free standards assert that faucets are the main contributors of lead in drinking water. The opposite is true. Over the past decade, lead levels have been reduced to nearly immeasurable amounts due to advancements in materials and manufacturing processes. This has been confirmed by American Waterworks Association Research Foundation (AwwaRF) research. The AwwaRF research showed faucet lead levels of less than 2 parts per billion. Aging infrastructure, including pipe and plumbing system components, are the main contributors of trace amounts.

Despite claims by proponents of lead-free legislative proposals, there are few, if any products on the market that can comply with stringent new levels. Application of new levels would preclude the availability of products that are proven to be among the safest available today.

