

# Lead Service Lines/Cost Benefit Analysis: Natural Resource Defense Council Issues Report



**Walter Wright, Jr.**  
wwright@mwlaw.com  
(501) 688.8839

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The National Resource Defense Council (“NRDC”) published an October 2023 report titled:

*Getting the Lead Out – Removing Lead Pipes Would Yield Hundreds of Billions of Dollars in Health Benefits (“Report”)*

The NRDC *Report* argues that the significant cost of removing lead service lines would be outweighed by greater benefits derived from reduction in public health issues.

The *Report* put forth calculations for what it believes would be saved monetarily from avoided health impacts. It concludes that over the next 35 years the United States could save an estimated \$686 billion in health costs.

Citing a Harvard School of Public Health analysis, the benefit of eliminating exposure to lead pipes is stated to include:

#### Benefits for Children

- Reduced short-term damage to cognitive function
- Reduced behavioral problems (such as impulsivity, attention deficits and hyperactivity/ADHD) and reduced conduct problems (such as aggressive conduct disorders)
- Reduced hearing impairment

#### Benefits for Adults

- Reduced hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Reduced coronary heart disease
- Reduced mortality from cardiovascular disease
- Reduced preterm births
- Reduced harm to the male reproductive system
- Reduced depression, ADHD, and dementia
- Reduced risk of lung cancer

#### Lifetime Benefits

- Reduced immunological damage and asthma
- Reduced harm to red blood cells/altered heme synthesis leading to anemia
- Reduced developmental problems

State-by-state estimates of benefits of full lead service line replacement (2016 \$) discounted to present value are provided.

In the case of Arkansas, the following figures are provided:

- NRDC 2021 estimate of lead service lines (40,000)
- Estimated benefits in \$ of lead service line removal using NRDC estimate of lead service lines (\$3,420,000,000)
- EPA 2023 estimate of lead service lines (171,771)
- Estimated benefits in \$ of lead service line removal using EPA estimate of lead service lines (\$14,686,420,500)

A copy of the *Report* can be downloaded [here](#).