

40 Public Health, Civil Rights Organizations and Leaders Urge Attorney General Maura Healey To Sue Lead Paint Companies

Open Letter Describes Devastating Human And Financial Toll Of Lead Poisoning In Children

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Boston, MA – Forty prominent public health, civil rights, and community-based organizations and leaders issued an [open letter](#) today to Attorney General Maura Healey urging her to file a lawsuit against lead paint companies to hold them accountable for deceptive marketing campaigns that have caused catastrophic harm to children in the Commonwealth.

Led by **Lawyers for Civil Rights (LCR)** and the **Massachusetts Public Health Association**, the coalition urges Attorney General Healey to follow the recent example set in California, where ten cities and counties successfully sued lead paint manufacturers, resulting in a \$305 million settlement that will fund the removal of lead paint in those jurisdictions.

"We have held tobacco companies responsible for the public health harms they created. We are also holding the opioid industry accountable. It's high time we did the same for lead paint companies that deliberately engaged in deceptive marketing campaigns in our Commonwealth, and that have caused untold human suffering," said Attorney Laura Maslow-Armand, who directs LCR's Health Disparities Project.

Attorney Maslow-Armand noted that children of color and immigrants living in low-income neighborhoods are disproportionately affected by the scourge of lead paint, which causes significant developmental delays, learning difficulties, and behavioral problems that last a lifetime.

Today's open letter cites ample evidence that lead paint companies marketed lead paint for residential use in Massachusetts with full knowledge that it would cause devastating and irreversible harm to young children. Thousands of children in Massachusetts have been exposed to lead hazards in their home as a result.

More than 72% of the Commonwealth's housing stock dates back to a pre-1950 period, at least twenty-eight years before the federal government banned lead-based paint for residential use. **In addition to the devastating human costs of this exposure, lead paint poisoning costs the Commonwealth an estimated \$276 million each year in increased healthcare and education costs, reduced productivity, and premature mortality.**

Dr. Philip Landrigan, who directs the Boston College Program in Global Public Health and the Common Good, remarked: "As a pediatrician who has worked for more than four decades to end lead poisoning in America's children, I strongly endorse this effort to compel the manufacturers of lead-based paint to pay for their past actions and to provide financial support for remediation."

The coalition asks the Attorney General to move forward expeditiously with a lawsuit to hold lead paint companies accountable.

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