



Green & Healthy Homes Initiative

Messages from Ruth Ann Norton, President and CEO

With the release today of **President Joe Biden's Build Back Better Framework**, America is taking a powerful step toward ending childhood lead poisoning and ensuring that lead's toxic legacy will be eradicated from hundreds of thousands of older homes across the United States. The \$150 billion in funding will be the single largest and most comprehensive investment in affordable housing in our country's history.

It will make critical investments in our lowest income communities to create healthy, safe and energy efficient homes that will have an immediate positive impact on health and racial equity. These investments will go a long way to address generational environmental injustices in the more than 30 million American homes in which families wake up every day to face the threat of lead poisoning, respiratory disease and high energy costs, giving rise to more equitable and healthy futures.

The funds will also address the capital needs of the public housing stock in large cities and rural communities to ensure it is not only safe and habitable but healthier and more energy efficient. The Build Back Better legislation will create more equitable communities, through investing in community-led redevelopments projects in historically under-resourced neighborhoods and as noted directly invests in the removal of lead-based paint in hundreds of thousands of homes.

Further, through the \$555 billion dedicated to clean energy and carbon reduction, a portion of these investments will go to ensuring that low and moderate-income families benefit from energy efficiency, clean energy, and de-carbonization. In partnership with the communities GHHI serves, these investments will put the U.S. on a path to meet its goal of reducing GHG emissions by 50-52% by 2030 - which is critical to preventing the worst impacts of climate change that disproportionately impact Black and Brown communities and limited income communities.

We commend and enthusiastically support the Biden Administration for focusing on the issues of lead poisoning prevention, healthy housing, energy efficiency and climate. If fully adopted by Congress, Build Back Better creates a pathway to healthier and more equitable opportunities for our children and the communities we serve.

GHHI will continue to dig into the details of the plan and its final adoption and will provide timely updates across all of its media platforms. And while this does not provide all the funding needed to solve our housing and climate crises, it is a bold step forward to recalibrating this nation's commitment to protecting our most vulnerable children and families and broadening fair and equitable futures.

On behalf of the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative I would like to congratulate the CDC on their leadership and commitment to advancing health equity and environmental justice through the elimination of lead poisoning, upon their announcement today officially lowering the blood lead reference value to 3.5 µg/dL.

This action recognizes that there is no safe level of lead for the developing child's brain and body, and creates opportunities to intervene earlier to mitigate the neurotoxic impacts of lead exposure and protect families from lead in their environments.

Lead poisoning can affect any child, but has disproportionately impacted our nation's Black and Brown children, due to a legacy of racist housing and environmental policies that have put families and communities at risk for lead exposure. The lowering of the blood lead reference level, along with increased federal investment in addressing lead in housing and drinking water, create an unprecedented opportunity to move the needle on the elimination of lead poisoning, and ensure that our children arrive at school ready to learn, and that our housing is a platform for good health and lifelong achievement.

Join us in spreading the word about this important advancement in health protective lead policy, and be sure to advocate to your state and local health officials to move with the CDC's lowered action level, so that we don't continue to delay critical services to mitigate the impact of lead exposure on our children.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Ann Norton', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Ruth Ann Norton, President and CEO