

Oral Health for All



Connecticut General Assembly
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

February 22, 2016

Re: HB 5350 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON FLUORIDATION OF THE PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY

Dear Senator Gerrantana, Representative Ritter, and members of the Public Health Committee:

As the Executive Director of the Connecticut Oral Health Initiative (COHI), I champion causes pertaining to oral health care and coverage. I am pleased to learn that the Public Health Committee is considering a bill that continues the requirement to add fluoride in public water supplies. This bill will optimize **community water fluoridation at the level recommended by the US Department of Health and Human Services**. Please support HB 5350, An Act Concerning the Department of Public Health's Recommendations on Fluoridation of the Public Water Supply, which is noted below:

A water company, as defined in section 25-32a, that serves twenty thousand or more persons shall add a measured amount of fluoride to the water supply so as to maintain a fluoride content that is not more than one-tenth of a milligram per liter different than the United States Department of Health and Human Services' most recent recommendation for optimal fluoride levels in drinking water to prevent tooth decay.

Tooth decay, which is largely preventable, remains the most common chronic disease of children aged 5 to 17 years. In Connecticut, tooth decay affects 1 out of 5 children, ages 3- 5 years, and 2 out of 5 children, ages 6 – 9 years.¹ Missing or unhealthy teeth also impact adults' job opportunities.² Poor dental health has significant consequences; however, community water fluoridation is a truly preventive measure to combat tooth decay.

Fluoridation is the adjustment of fluoride to an optimal level to prevent tooth decay.³ Fluoride, which is a mineral that occurs naturally in water, prevents tooth decay by providing frequent and consistent contact with low levels of fluoride" over the course of a day. Research conducted over the past 10 years—at a time when most people regularly use fluoride toothpaste—continues to show that people living in fluoridated communities have significantly less tooth decay.⁴

1 http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/oral_health/pdf/oral_health_ct_2012_rev.pdf

2 <http://www.cnbc.com/id/100810944>

3 <http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/>

4 <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5014a1.htm>

Additionally, water fluoride levels are monitored daily in Connecticut to ensure optimal fluoridation.⁵ Studies published by the American Journal of Public Health, Harvard University, Public Health England and many other recognized authorities agree that fluoride is both safe and effective.⁶

The cost to fluoridate water for the lifetime of one person is less than the cost to treat one cavity.⁷ Significantly, fluoridated water closes the health disparity gap between the residents that each of you represent. **HB 5350 is a true health equity measure. The benefits of fluoridation impact everyone, no matter the race, age, income level, educational attainment, or ethnicity.**

In 1965, Connecticut became the first state to enact a law guaranteeing access to fluoridated water. Further underscoring the significance of this measure, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) named community water fluoridation as one of the “Ten Great Public Health Interventions of the 20th Century”. **Water fluoridation is valued in our state and in this country.**

The current range of fluoridation in public water supplies is 0.8 milligrams per liter to 1.2 milligrams per liter. However, the US Department of Health and Human Services recently adjusted the target fluoridation level to 0.7 milligrams per liter, based on scientific research that recognizes the optimal level for reducing decay. This adjustment is similar to the adjustments health experts have made to Vitamin D or calcium in food and beverages.

As a member of the Public Health Committee, I know you share my concern for oral health care measures that affect all of us as a community. **I urge you to support this very important measure that will ensure healthier children and adults in our state.** If I can be of any assistance, please contact me. Thank you for your time and your commitment to the health of all Connecticut residents.

Sincerely,

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Attached: US Public Health Service Recommendation for Fluoride Concentration in Drinking Water for the Prevention of Dental Caries, Public Health Reports, July-August 2015

⁵http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/drinking_water/pdf/Water_Fluoridation_Fact_Sheet.pdf

⁶ <http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2013.301857>;

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21799046>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fluoride-monitoring-report-finds-lower-levels-of-tooth-decay-in-fluoridated-areas-and-no-evidence-of-harm-to-health>

⁷ http://fluorideinfo.org/fluoride_waterFluoridation.html

