

Our Rights, Our Water - Massachusetts

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OUR CONCERNS ABOUT WATER FLUORIDATION

I. Citizens' Rights Concerns

- **Statewide fluoridation is not democratic**
In many communities nationwide, citizens have voted fluoridation in or out. Historically, when well informed and when given the opportunity to vote, a majority of voters oppose fluoridation.
- **Right to vote**
A statewide mandate would nullify the current state law (GL 111, Sec. 8c), which provides the only recourse, however difficult, for citizens to vote on fluoridation in their communities.
- **Right to choose**
People must maintain the right to choose their own medication.

II. Health Concerns

- **EPA unions oppose fluoridation**
The union representing the scientists, lawyers and other professionals at the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C., has opposed the practice of water fluoridation for many years on the basis of health concerns. Ten other EPA unions across the US have recently joined this union in calling for a moratorium on the practice of fluoridation, as well as a full Congressional investigation of the public policy.
- **EPA health goals ignored**
The EPA defines the Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) for toxic elements in drinking water thus: "the level below which there are no known or anticipated effects to health." The MCLG for arsenic, lead, and radioactive particles, all contaminants of the scrubber liquors used for fluoridation, is 0.0 ppb (zero parts per billion). Therefore, any addition of fluorine-bearing substances to drinking water that include these contaminants is contrary to the intent of EPA's established health goals.
- **Absence of safety studies on silicofluorides**
Silicofluorides are the unrefined, contaminated fluoridation chemicals used in over 90% of fluoridation programs. When asked by the U.S. House Committee on Science for chronic toxicity test data on sodium fluorosilicate and hydrofluorosilicic acid, Charles Fox of the EPA answered on June 23, 1999, "EPA was not able to identify chronic toxicity data on these chemicals". Further, EPA's National Risk Management Research Laboratory stated, on April 25, 2002, that the chemistry of silicofluorides is "not well understood" and studies are needed.
- **Increased blood lead levels in children**
Two recent studies with a combined sampling of over 400,000 children found significantly increased levels of lead in children's blood when silicofluorides from the phosphate fertilizer industry were used as the fluoridating agent. When compared with non-silicofluorides, this shows a significant difference in health effects even between different fluoridation compounds.
- **Ingestion of fluoride linked to many health effects**
Contrary to assertions that the health effects of fluoride ingestion already have been scientifically proven to be safe and that there is no credible scientific concern, over the last fifteen years the ingestion of fluoride has been linked in scientific peer-reviewed literature to neurotoxicity, bone pathology, reproductive effects, interference with the pineal gland, gene mutations, thyroid pathology, and the increasing incidence and severity of dental fluorosis. This has caused professionals who once championed the uses of fluoride in preventing tooth decay, to reverse their position and call for a halt to further exposures. It is of significance that 14 Nobel Prize winning scientists, including the 2000 Nobel Laureate in Medicine, Arvid Carlsson, have expressed reservations on, or outright opposition to, fluoridation.
- **No FDA approval for systemic use of fluoride**
The U.S. Food and Drug Administration in December 2000 stated to the U.S. House Committee on Science they have never provided any specific approval for safety or effectiveness for any fluoride substance intended to be ingested for the purpose of reducing tooth decay.
- **Total fluoride exposure of growing concern**
Total fluoride exposure from all sources, including foods, beverages, water, air, pesticides, many pharmaceuticals, and industrial exposure is of growing concern within the scientific community. As evidenced in the U.S. Public Health Service ATSDR 1993 report, which was referenced in correspondence between the

U.S. House Committee on Science and Charles Fox of the U.S. EPA, large subsets of the population, including the elderly, children, and pregnant women, may be unusually susceptible to the toxic effects of fluoride.

- **Centers for Disease Control: Fluoride primarily topical**

The CDC has stated..."research suggests that fluoride prevents dental caries predominately after eruption of the teeth into the mouth, and its actions primarily are topical for both adults and children." Strangely, they still support fluoridation.

III. Environmental Concerns

- **Silicofluorides: unrefined industrial waste**

91% of Americans ingesting artificially fluoridated water are consuming silicofluorides. This is a class of fluoridation chemicals that includes hydrofluosilicic acid and its salt form, sodium fluorosilicate. These chemicals are collected from the pollution scrubbers of the phosphate fertilizer industry. The scrubber liquors contain contaminants such as arsenic, lead, cadmium, mercury, and radioactive particles, are legally regulated as toxic waste, and are prohibited from direct dispersal into the environment. However, these unrefined materials are injected directly into the drinking water. **Sodium fluoride**, used in the remaining municipalities, is also a similarly contaminated industrial waste product.

- **Scarcity of environmental impact studies**

This is of deep concern to us. Studies that do exist indicate damage to salmon and to plant ecosystems. It is significant that Canada's water quality guideline to protect freshwater life from fluoride's toxicity is 0.12 ppm (parts per million).

- **Over 99% of fluoridated water is released directly into the environment at about 1ppm**

This water is NOT used for drinking or cooking.

IV. Ethical Concerns

- **Medication without informed consent**

Fluoridation means medicating populations of people, regardless of their needs or individual sensitivities. Allergic, sensitive, and compromised persons are subjected to very distressful and potentially harmful fluoride exposure. Only expensive distillation or reverse osmosis systems remove fluoride from tap water.

- **Inequitability**

People with limited incomes are the least able to avoid fluoridated water due to the expenses required to replace or purify tap water. They are also more likely to experience negative health effects from fluoride if their overall health has been compromised by poverty.

V. Economic Concerns

- **Unfunded mandate**

The imposition of costs on communities for this ill-conceived project is unacceptable.

- **Costs usually miscalculated**

The cost usually quoted by fluoridation promoters is only the cost of the fluoride itself. Not calculated in are many other costs: protective gear for workers, breakdown in equipment, overfeeds, illnesses and allergic reactions (in workers and customers), bottled water and purification systems for all people who should not or do not wish to drink, cook, or wash in fluoridated water, including infants, the elderly, pregnant women, and people with fluoride allergies and sensitivities, dental fluorosis, arthritis, thyroid disease, diabetes, hip fractures, etc. Dental fluorosis alone, now at epidemic levels, costs thousands per individual to correct.

VI. Legal Concerns

When the public understands how detrimental fluoride can be, professionals and governmental entities may be subject to endless legal action by those considering themselves damaged by fluoride.

VII. In Consideration of the concerns raised above, we urge you to review *all* sides of the current information available as you contemplate the issue of mandatory statewide fluoridation. Please note the potential conflict of interest of those who have endorsed fluoridation for many decades; it would take extraordinary courage to admit to being wrong about something one has always supported.

We suggest the following websites:

www.ROWMA.org, www.fluoridealert.org, www.keepers-of-the-well.org, www.SLweb.org, www.saveourwater.org

[For references: Much of the content of this document has been borrowed with permission from "A Statement of Concern on Fluoridation" from the national non-profit Second Look. Please contact ROWMA at mail@ROWMA.org if you wish for a link to the original document, which contains detailed references.]