[Insert date here]

[Name of Public Official]

[Agency, Council or Governing Body]

[Street Address]

[City / State / Zip Code]

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

We, the undersigned members of this community, are writing to voice our opposition to the proposal to cease the fluoridation of the public water system serving [insert town/county/city]. If approved, such a proposal would severely undermine the health and quality of life of residents. Moreover, it would impose a hidden “tax” on our community by increasing the pain and cost of dental care.

The American Dental Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, Institute of Medicine, and many other respected health and medical organizations endorse the safety and effectiveness of fluoridation.[[1]](#endnote-1) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has called fluoridation one of the “great public health achievements of the 20th century.”[[2]](#endnote-2) Why? Because decades of evidence show conclusively that water fluoridation reduces tooth decay by 20 to 40 percent.[[3]](#endnote-3)

As the rate of fluoridation steadily increased in the U.S., the average number of decayed, filled or missing teeth among 12-year-olds fell 68 percent between 1966 and 1994.[[4]](#endnote-4) Although fluoridated water is proven to protect teeth even as they are forming in children’s mouths, research also shows that fluoridation benefits Americans of all ages, including older adults.[[5]](#endnote-5)

While dental health has improved for many people in recent decades, tooth decay remains the most common chronic childhood disease—five times more prevalent than asthma.[[6]](#endnote-6) At a time when millions of Americans lack dental insurance, fluoridation offers a simple, cost effective preventive strategy that all residents of a community can benefit from simply by turning on their tap.[[7]](#endnote-7)

In these tough fiscal times, cities and states are increasingly looking for health interventions that save money. Research shows that water fluoridation offers perhaps the greatest return-on-investment of any public health strategy. Reductions in the costs of filling and extracting diseased teeth—not to mention in lost work time and pain—more than makes up for the cost of fluoridating our water. Consider these facts:

* For most cities, every $1 invested in water fluoridation saves $38 in unnecessary dental treatment costs.[[8]](#endnote-8)
* A 2010 study in New York State found that Medicaid enrollees in less fluoridated counties needed 33 percent more fillings, root canals, and extractions than those in counties where fluoridated water was much more prevalent.[[9]](#endnote-9) As a result, the treatment costs per Medicaid recipient were $23.65 higher for those living in less fluoridated counties.[[10]](#endnote-10)
* Water fluoridation saved Colorado nearly $149 million in 2003 by avoiding unnecessary treatment costs. The study revealed that the average savings were roughly $61 per person.[[11]](#endnote-11)
* A Texas study confirmed that the state saved $24 per child, per year in Medicaid expenditures because of the cavities that were prevented by drinking fluoridated water.[[12]](#endnote-12)
* A 1999 study compared Louisiana parishes (counties) that were fluoridated with those that were not. The study found that low-income children in communities without fluoridated water were three times more likely than those in fluoridated communities to need dental treatment in a hospital operating room, where care is more costly.[[13]](#endnote-13)

Fluoride toothpaste—by itself—does not provide full protection against decay. The benefits from water fluoridation build on those from fluoride in toothpaste. Studies conducted in communities that fluoridated water in the years after fluoride toothpastes were widely used have shown a lower rate of tooth decay than communities without fluoridated water. The co-author of a 2010 study noted that research has confirmed “the most effective source of fluoride to be water fluoridation.”[[14]](#endnote-14)

Before you vote on a proposal to turn back the clock on oral health, we urge you to carefully consider the overwhelming evidence that supports continued fluoridation. Most communities fluoridate their public water system. Please do not deprive the children and adults of our community the proven protection that fluoridation provides.

Sincerely,

[insert names here]

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