



## Remarks to a City Council or Local Board

*Parent Version*

(+/- 4 minutes, 30 seconds)

**NOTE:** *This version is written as for a parent, but this text could easily be used by anyone who wishes to speak in support of community water fluoridation. If the speaker is not a parent, a few areas of the remarks would need to be changed. **Read through these remarks carefully, as some references (e.g., bike lanes) might not apply to your community or state.** The 9th paragraph states that “most children in our state” have access to fluoridated water; this is not true for the states of Hawaii, Idaho, Louisiana, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oregon and Wyoming.*

*Consider adding or deleting a few sentences if that will help you make these remarks feel more like your own words. Consider adding a personal story, but keep it as brief as possible. Be sure to deliver these remarks a couple of times and use a wristwatch or internet stopwatch to time yourself. Your city council or other local body will probably have a time limit on remarks from the public, so make sure you keep your remarks within that limit. Most importantly, time yourself while speaking these remarks aloud. That’s the best way to get an accurate estimate of the time. Be sure to stress certain phrases and to insert pauses when appropriate to draw attention to key points. Don’t speak in a hurry.*

I look around this room, and I see a lot of people. Nearly all of them are adults. Community water fluoridation certainly benefits adults, but it has a special meaning for children — and, as a parent, that’s what I want to focus on.

Whether children grow up healthy depends on the decisions we make both as parents and community leaders. Growing up with dental problems can cause pain and damage their self-esteem. They are counting on *us* to make smart decisions that will help put their future on the right track.

Ending community water fluoridation would pull the rug out from under their future. As a parent, let me explain why I am urging you to continue fluoridation.

Fluoride is nature's way to fight tooth decay. It's a mineral that occurs naturally in nearly all water sources, even in the oceans. American researchers discovered the benefits of fluoride in drinking water back in the 1930s and '40s.

Some people would have you believe that brushing with fluoride toothpaste is enough to protect teeth. But the evidence shows this belief is false. Maximum protection requires using *both* approaches. We know that because a number of studies have been done since fluoride toothpaste became widely used.

Children today are much less likely to have cavities than they were 40 or 50 years ago. Still, tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease. Given what we know, why would we even consider ending fluoridation of our water supply. Does having smoke alarms in our homes mean we should get rid of our local fire department? Does having seatbelts in our cars mean we don't need to have air bags too?

The answer to both of those questions is *No*. The same is true for protecting our dental health. Using all of the prevention strategies available to us makes much more sense and is much more effective than relying only on one.

[Name of your community] values health and wellness. The bike lanes that we have and the community centers and health clubs reflect this. We know that our quality of life is directly tied to being healthy. Let's not turn our back on these values.

Opponents raise concerns about fluoride. But we should all keep in mind that almost anything has the potential to cause health problems if it is consumed at extremely high levels. That's true for fluoride, and it's true for calcium and Vitamin D. Does that mean we should take Vitamin D out of our milk? Of course not.

Many of the so-called "studies" that fluoride opponents refer to are flawed in various ways. Many of them tested fluoride levels that are way higher than the level used to fluoridate drinking water in our community. Many of the studies they refer to were conducted in China, where arsenic and lead contamination could have distorted the results.

Most of the children in our state have access to fluoridated water. I don't want to live in a community that would deprive its children of an inexpensive, proven form of prevention. Let me stress the word *proven* because fluoride is something that has been used and studied in America for 70 years. If the claims made by opponents had a shred of credibility, we would have seen health harms long ago. They cannot show any medical or scientific proof that fluoridation has harmed our community.

Many dentists who have worked in both fluoridated and non-fluoridated communities report seeing many more cavities in patients who live in a non-fluoridated community.

The evidence behind fluoridation is rock solid. In fact, *all* of the leading health and medical organizations endorse it. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has called it one of the "10 great public health achievements of the 20th century." Fluoridation is endorsed by the most respected organizations in our nation, including the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Dental Association. These are the groups that have examined this topic for many, many years. As a parent of [insert number] children, I trust these respected organizations over the claims that a handful of people are making.

Some people may think our community would save money by ending fluoridation. But the opposite is true. A study commissioned by the CDC found that every \$1 invested in fluoridation saves \$38 because it reduces the need for fillings, crowns and other dental treatments. In other words, stopping fluoridation *would increase* the community's dental bills.

In conclusion, I urge you *not* to make a decision that would cause our dental bills to go up. I urge you *not* to make a decision that would lead to more cavities and toothaches for our residents.

Please reject the scare tactics and false claims you are hearing from opponents. Please continue fluoridation in our community.

Thank you.

*[Or consider using the following text as your closing paragraph:]*

Please continue to provide fluoridated water to our community. Stand with those of us who value health and wellness. And respect the recommendations of the leading health and medical organizations — *all* of which endorse community water fluoridation. Thank you.

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