



**Testimony of Maine Public Health Association in Opposition to:
LD 1570: An Act to Prohibit Fluoridation of the Public Water Supply**

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
Room 209, Cross Building
Tuesday, April 22, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Rebecca Boulos. I am a resident of South Portland and executive director of Maine Public Health Association.

MPHA is the state's oldest, largest, and most diverse association for public health professionals. We represent more than 850 individuals and 70 organizational members across the state, and our mission is to advance the health of all people and places in Maine.

MPHA opposes LD 1570: "An Act to Prohibit Fluoridation of the Public Water Supply."

Community water fluoridation is one of the most effective public health measures of the last century. It prevents tooth decay, reduces health disparities, and saves money. Indeed, the Return on Investment is about \$20 for every \$1 invested, saving \$6.5 billion annually in oral health care costs. Community water fluoridation is associated with 25% fewer cavities, saving \$32 per person per year because of avoided dental treatment costs and associated missed work and school days.¹

Dental disease is preventable. Adjusting fluoride levels in water to support oral health is safe, thoroughly studied, and endorsed by every major public health and medical organization. If preventive oral health care, including through community water fluoridation, is available for low-income children and adults, then the risk of dental infections, tooth loss, and periodontal disease is reduced. Children, especially in lower-income families, benefit the most. Fluoridation helps keep kids in school and out of pain by preventing the number one chronic disease of childhood: tooth decay.

The connections between dental disease and limitations in employment opportunities, educational achievement, and social mobility are well established. People with poor oral health are also more likely to have other health problems. Conversely, better oral health contributes to better nutrition, which can further benefit health status.

MPHA supports legislation that improves health equity and reduces health disparities. We believe this bill will worsen public health outcomes for already vulnerable populations. We respectfully request you to vote LD 1570 "Ought Not to Pass." Thank you for your consideration.

¹ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Return on Investment: Optimally Fluoridated Water. <https://www.cdc.gov/oral-health/php/infographics/roi-fluoridated-water.html>. May 15, 2024.