



Testimony of the Maine Dental Association
before the Health & Human Services Committee

LD 1570 An Act to Prohibit Fluoridation of the Public Water Supply

Opposed

Public Hearing: Tuesday, April 22, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and the Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Adam Saltz. I am a board-certified periodontist practicing in South Portland, Maine. I currently serve as President of the Maine Dental Association and Vice Chair-Elect to the American Dental Association's New Dentist Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony in staunch opposition to LD 1570.

Community water fluoridation stands as one of the safest, most effective, and equitable public health measures in American history. For nearly 80 years, it has safeguarded vulnerable populations from a range of dental diseases. This practice is strongly endorsed by leading health authorities, including the American Dental Association (ADA), the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General. The AAPD highlights its importance in the fight against early childhood tooth decay. This is the most common chronic condition among children in the United States, at a rate five times higher than asthma.

As a dental specialist, I treat patients who suffer from rampant decay and advanced gum and bone infections. They require extensive disease surgery and/or multiple extractions to rehabilitate their esthetics, health, and function. Treatment is timely, costly, and, in most cases, preventable. These patients often live in areas with limited access to routine dental care and rely on systemic preventive measures like fluoridated water as their first, and sometimes only, line of defense.

The scientific consensus on community water fluoridation is both broad and longstanding. Peer-reviewed studies and meta-analyses consistently demonstrate that fluoridation at the recommended level of 0.7 parts per million reduces tooth decay by approximately 25% in both children and adults, regardless of socioeconomic status, geography, or access to routine dental services. It is not just a health issue but an economic one. For every \$1 spent on community water fluoridation, approximately \$38 is saved in dental treatment costs. These savings benefit individuals, families, healthcare systems, and state Medicaid programs alike.

LD 1570 will strip the guiding authority from both the Department of Health and Human Services and from local municipalities, effectively banning a vital public health measure across the state. This legislation would undermine decades of scientific research and regulatory

oversight. More critically, it would disproportionately harm those who already face barriers to accessing dental care: children, older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income Mainers.

Eliminating fluoridation is not a step toward personal freedom or improved health autonomy—it is a catastrophic step backward. It will exacerbate oral health disparities, strain existing dental workforce shortages, increase healthcare costs, and worst of all, cause preventable pain, tooth loss, and systemic health complications for thousands of Mainers.

As a dentist, a public health advocate, and a Mainer committed to the wellbeing of my community, I urge you to reject LD 1570. We cannot jeopardize one of our most tested and successful public health protections.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam Saltz", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Adam Saltz, DMD, MS, MPH
President, Maine Dental Association