

Lasorsa, Megan

From: Steve and Loretta Mills <lmills5977@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 17, 2025 12:31 PM
To: Cmte HHS
Subject: Please Vote ONTP on LD 1570 and Protect Community Water Fluoridation

This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.

Dear Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Stephen C Mills, DDS and I am a Board Certified Pediatric Dentist. I have practiced my specialty in Maine since September of 1987. While I am now retired from office work, I continue to serve the public as a member of the Board of Directors of the Children's Oral Health Network of Maine. During those 38 years I have continually discussed with parents, medical professionals, families and communities the idea of community water fluoridation (CWF). I have studied this issue diligently since first becoming a dentist in 1981. I'm writing as a concerned dental professional to urge you to vote **Ought Not to Pass (ONTP) on LD 1570: An Act To Prohibit Fluoridation of the Public Water Supply**

I am convinced of the scientific basis of the safety and efficacy of CWF. It is the perfect public health measure that helps everyone as it "benefits everyone in the community, regardless of income, education, or access to dental care." 1 Various negative arguments to CWF have surfaced over the years but I am convinced that the **controlled** addition of fluoride to community water supplies has stood the test of time in both the literature and in real-life scenarios. Several years ago I was invited by some residents of Boothbay Harbor to present a short powerpoint presentation to their town Board which was accessible to the public. They were considering removing fluoride from their public water source. While we, here in Maine, have a good number of qualified individuals to present similar information, I offer my presentation to anyone who might benefit by it.

But beyond the facts as we now evaluate them, we must decide if Dental Decay, both in children and adults, is in fact still a problem here in Maine as well as nationwide. Therefore we must decide if water fluoridation is still a significant public health measure in 2025 and beyond. The answer is simply a very definite yes.

Children in Maine, across the economic and social spectrum, often struggle to find a dental home where they can access adequate preventive and treatment needs. Legislative bills which seek to increase access for all children for their dental needs continually appear and are well needed. So public health measures, that are accessible to all individuals without bias, are still as critical as ever.

Dental decay is far from a "problem solved". Decay rates are still very significant and, as you all know, target those with unfortunate social determinants of health such as lower socioeconomic circumstances, cultural and ethnic variances and educational issues. So, it is still a problem. It affects those who are least likely to be able to address it themselves, plus it is both safe and effective. Are there any stronger reasons to maintain one of the most successful public health measures in the history of our country!?

Finally, I resent the bill's intent to remove this issue from being determined by the individual communities who control their own public water sources. I will admit that small communities do present the opportunities for a few individuals to effect a larger number of neighbors. But declaring that the whole state be controlled by this bill and the chance of doing something good for their own community is taken away from them, just seems wrong.

I count being part of the working group that led to the fluoridation of the Portland Water District in the mid nineteen nineties as perhaps the most important thing I have done in my career. As I have left my office work and now look to the population as a whole, I see that there is still a great deal of work to be done. I passionately implore you not to take a step backwards by removing the backbone of oral public health in our state.

Please support Maine's long-standing commitment to oral health, and the work of this committee over the past several legislative sessions, and vote **ONTP on LD 1570**.

Thank you for your service,

Sincerely submitted,

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1. Tinanoff, N, Dhar V, Caffrey EM. "Community Water Fluoridation: Evidence of Efficacy and Risks." Pediatric Dentistry 46(6): 370-371 Nov/Dec 2024.