

From: "Carrillo, Arturo - HPW" <Arturo.Carrillo@houstontx.gov>

To: "Mussio, Gabriel - HPW" <Gabriel.Mussio3@houstontx.gov>

Date: 9/26/2024 12:52:57 PM

Subject: FW: AWWA Public Affairs Advisory - Fluoride levels in drinking water

What does this mean to us in the long run if EPA reduces the permissible levels or even bans the fluoridation of drinking water?

Arturo Carrillo | Senior Division Manager
Houston Water | Wastewater Operations

Office: 832-395-3558 | Mobile: 713-775-4548



From: AWWA Public Affairs <publicaffairs@awwa.org>

Sent: Wednesday, September 25, 2024 5:03 PM

To: Carrillo, Arturo - HPW <Arturo.Carrillo@houstontx.gov>

Subject: AWWA Public Affairs Advisory - Fluoride levels in drinking water

[This message came from outside the City of Houston email system. Please be careful while clicking links, opening attachments, or replying to this email.]

[View in Browser](#)



AWWA ADVISORY

A BENEFIT OF YOUR AWWA UTILITY MEMBERSHIP 

Public Affairs Advisory

Who: U.S. District Court for Northern District of California

What: Fluoride levels in drinking water

When: Sept. 25, 2024

In ongoing litigation between the advocacy group Food and Water Watch and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a U.S. district court judge yesterday ruled that community water fluoridation at established optimal levels poses an unreasonable risk to public health under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA).

While noting that “this finding does not conclude with certainty that fluoridated water is injurious to public health,” Judge Edward M. Chen of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California wrote:

“... as required by the Amended TSCA, the Court finds there is an unreasonable *risk* of such injury, a risk sufficient to require the EPA to engage with a regulatory response. This order does not dictate precisely what that response must be. Amended TSCA leaves that decision in the first instance to the EPA. One thing EPA cannot do, however, in the face of this Court's finding, is to ignore that risk.”

The court noted EPA “has options” in how it may respond, writing that “regulatory action can range from requiring a mere warning label to

banning the chemical.” This development has already resulted in [national media coverage](#) and may prompt questions to drinking water utilities about their water fluoridation practices.

The ruling cites specifically risks of reduced IQ levels in children and developing fetuses.

“In all, there is substantial and scientifically credible evidence establishing that fluoride poses a risk to human health; it is associated with a reduction in the IQ of children and is hazardous at dosages that are far too close to fluoride levels in the drinking water of the United States. And this risk is unreasonable under Amended TSCA. Reduced IQ poses serious harm. Studies have linked IQ decrements of even one or two points to e.g., reduced educational attainment, employment status, productivity, and earned wages. Indeed, the EPA recognizes that reduction of IQ poses a serious community health issue. Moreover, highly susceptible populations are impacted, including over two million pregnant women and babies, a number far exceeding population size the EPA has looked to in determining whether regulatory action was warranted in other risk evaluations (i.e., 500 people or less).”

The current recommended optimized level of fluoride in community water supplies is 0.7 milligrams per liter. Currently, there are both primary (health-based) and secondary (aesthetic) drinking water standards under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) is 4.0 milligrams per liter and the secondary MCL is 2.0 milligrams per liter.

This ruling comes after the U.S. National Toxicology Program [published a final monograph](#) finding a linkage between fluoride in drinking water and lower IQ in children. Following the publication of that monograph, the American Dental Association (ADA) issued a [statement](#) last month that, in part, said:

“According to the ADA’s expert committee that examined the report, the monograph does not provide any new or conclusive evidence that should necessitate any changes in current community water fluoridation practices for public health policy consideration. None of the studies on IQ included in the NTP’s review were conducted in the U.S. and were instead from areas with high levels of naturally-occurring fluoride in water.”

EPA’s [latest six-year review](#) describes the NTP monograph as inadequate to support revision of the current fluoride standard.

If contacted by media or customers, AWWA recommends utilities:

- Reaffirm your commitment to delivering safe drinking water in your community.
- Acknowledge the concern or uncertainty that the Court ruling may create for some people.
- Express your utility’s interest in ongoing research related to fluoride.
- Describe how your system approaches fluoride treatment, explaining how you add/remove fluoride to achieve the desired public health benefit/protection as described by leading public health authorities (CDC, American Dental Association, American Medical Association, World Health Organization).
- Describe your [state’s requirements](#) for fluoridation if applicable.
- State your commitment to keeping your community informed of developments related to drinking water treatment decisions.

The Fluoride Action Network, which opposes community water fluoridation, posted a [statement](#) celebrating the court’s decision.

Utilities contacted by media or customers may find the following resources helpful:

- [AWWA Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Policy Statement](#)
- [National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine – Based on Science](#)
- [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Community Water Fluoridation](#)
- DrinkTap’s [Fluoride in Water page](#)

Questions can be directed to [Steve Via](#), AWWA’s federal relations director, or [Greg Kail](#), AWWA’s director of communications.



American Water Works Association
6666 W. Quincy Ave. | Denver, Colorado 80235
Telephone: 1-800-926-7337

[Email AWWA](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

OR reply to this message with the word Remove in the subject line.

This email was sent to arturo.carrillo@houstontx.gov, 03580634
