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January 6, 2001

To Whom It May Concern:

In November 1999 the Bay Area Action Council voted unanimously to oppose the fluoridation of public drinking water. We oppose fluoridation on grounds that the deliberate pollution of public drinking water is morally bankrupt, medically indefensible, of questionable dental benefit, and poses serious threats to our environment.

We object to mass medication because it fundamentally erodes our constitutionally protected freedom to choose, or refuse, medication. Water fluoridation presumes to prescribe medication to every person, regardless of dental need or medical consequence. Legal concerns, ethical constraint, and common sense dictate that all recipients be both willing and medically indicated to receive treatment.

Fluoride is not a nutrient, it has no metabolic function in any organism. The chemicals used in water fluoridation programs have never been tested for safety or effectiveness, and surprisingly, none have ever been approved by the FDA. Putting fluoride into drinking water violates every principle of prescribing medication. The dosage is unregulated, it is delivered by the wrong route of administration (ingested instead of topically), it is given to unwilling and non-target populations (e.g. those with dentures), and it is known to have negative health consequences in susceptible portions of the population. Ask yourself if would you trust a health professional who violated even one these fundamental principles of prescribing medication?

If the ethical and medical arguments are not persuasive enough, consider that fluoride is not the "silver bullet" for dental cavities that many powerful organizations would like you to believe. There has never been a scientifically defensible study that demonstrates a significant reduction in dental caries from ingestion of fluoride. In fact, most modern studies indicate that if fluoride has any effect it is from topical application rather than from ingestion. Further, many modern studies implicate fluoride in a broad range of medical ailments including osteosarcoma, neurologic impairment, dental fluorosis, and increased rates of hip fracture. Fluoride should be administered to target populations, in regulated doses by properly trained medical professionals, not blithely added to drinking water as a panacea for poor dental hygiene.

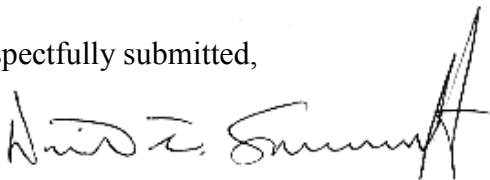
Furthermore, the environmental consequences of dumping fluoride-containing wastes into terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems have never been evaluated. Over 90% of the chemicals used to fluoridate American water supplies are untreated hazardous industrial waste from the phosphate

fertilizer and aluminum processing industries. These untreated mixtures contain numerous known environmental toxins (radionuclides, lead, mercury, cadmium, arsenic, mercury, selenium, and silver) and are prohibited from being dumped on land, in aquatic systems, or in the ocean. However, once designated for fluoridation programs they can be dumped, without any analysis of their components or environmental consequences, into our public drinking water and from there into the environment. To date, no thorough analysis of the materials being dumped, nor their cumulative impact on the environment has been done. These fluoride-containing wastes are nothing more than a protected pollutant, we find this situation to be illegal, immoral, and intolerable.

Fluoride at concentrations as low as 0.2 ppm has been shown to impact freshwater salmon. Federally listed salmon species (Coho and Steelhead) in our local streams and the Bay could be directly impacted by runoff of fluoridated water. One might also reasonably expect that highly sensitive amphibians such as the California Tiger Salamander, and endangered Red legged frog could be impacted by constant exposure to fluoride, and its associated environmental toxins, entering our aquatic ecosystems. In addition, the long-term accumulation of fluoride in bay sediments and riparian systems has never been addressed. Until the long term ecosystem impacts of this biologically damaging element are known, the precautionary principle dictates that we suspend the practice of deliberately adding fluoridated wastes into the very systems many of us work hard to preserve and restore.

In sum, the addition of a known human carcinogen, laced with other known human and environmental toxins, to public drinking water, without appropriate state and federally mandated human-health and environmental reporting, is unacceptable. Until those entities responsible for adding these substances to our bodies and to the environment have done the proper testing and reporting, we strongly support a moratorium on water fluoridation. It is our considered opinion that when the honest results of such inquiries are known, fluoride will be relegated to the medicine cabinet where it rightfully belongs.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David T. Smernoff". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent vertical stroke at the end.

David T. Smernoff, Ph.D.
Bay Area Action