



The State of New Hampshire
Department of Environmental Services



Robert R. Scott, Commissioner

January 27, 2021

The Honorable Andrew Renzullo
Chair, House Resources, Recreation and Development Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 305
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 611 – AN ACT abolishing fluoridation in water

Dear Chair Renzullo and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 611 which would prohibit the introduction of fluoride into drinking water of the State. The Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) does not support this legislation.

In New Hampshire, 12 communities (serving approximately 260,000 people) add fluoride to their public water systems to prevent tooth decay. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that appropriate concentrations of fluoride be present in public water supplies because fluoride has been demonstrated to be safe and cost-effective in reducing tooth decay through every stage of life and for all people. NHDES defers to the Division of Public Health Services of the Department of Health and Human Services Division for an in depth discussion concerning the public health effects of fluoridation and of the proposed ban.

Existing State statutes require that the proposal to fluoridate be subject to a vote and that majority approval is needed to begin fluoridation. The same procedure can also be used to discontinue fluoridation that is already occurring. Therefore, there is a process in place for customers of the water system to implement or abolish fluoridation for their drinking water system and a statewide prohibition is not warranted.

If local voter approval is given to fluoridate, the water system must submit the design for its chemical addition system to NHDES for approval. The design must include the fluoride chemical to be used, the necessary chemical feed equipment, safety features to prevent an overfeed of the chemical, and the monitoring equipment to be used to ensure the proper fluoride concentration is achieved and maintained. Once the fluoride addition begins, a monitoring schedule is established by NHDES to ensure that the proper amount of fluoride is being added. The program also requires monthly submission of treatment record-keeping and periodic field inspection of the equipment by NHDES staff. In addition, NHDES requires that the system operator have the proper operator certification grade for that treatment process.

The Honorable Representative Renzullo
Chair, House Resources, Recreation and Development Committee
January 27, 2021
Page 2

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 611. Should you have questions, or need additional information, please feel free to contact either Brandon Kernen, Administrator, Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau, at 603-271-1168 or Brandon.Kernen@des.nh.gov, or me at 603-271-3449 or Robert.Scott@des.nh.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert R. Scott", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert R. Scott
Commissioner

ec: Sponsors of HB 611: Representatives Cushman, Abramson, Binford, Moffett, Cambrils, Schmidt, and Howard