



Commissioner Nick Fish
City of Portland

September 12, 2012

This morning, Portland City Council voted unanimously to add fluoride to Portland's drinking water.

As co-sponsor of the Ordinance, I concluded that fluoridation is a safe, cost-effective, and common-sense approach to promoting public health.

I did not reach this decision lightly. I have heard from Portlanders who strongly oppose adding fluoride to Portland's water.

But today, the children and families of Portland are looking to this Council for leadership, and we must seize this opportunity.

Here's how I came to my decision:

Fluoride is **supported by a broad coalition** of public health, medical, and community-based organizations. In fact, virtually every mainstream health organization that has weighed in supports fluoridation.

Fluoride is safe. Today, over 200 million Americans drink fluoridated water. Portland is one of the last cities of its size not to fluoridate its water. The CDC calls community fluoridated water "one of the top 10 public health advances of the 20th century."

Fluoride is cost-effective. It will cost families about \$6 to build a fluoridation facility, and about 64 cents a year to operate it. For this modest investment, we can prevent tooth decay and save millions of dollars in unnecessary dental bills.

Most importantly, **fluoride will benefit all of our kids**, regardless of race or income. An alarming number in children in Oregon, roughly 1 in 3, suffer from serious tooth decay. This is morally unacceptable.

As the parent of an 8-year-old, covered by health and dental insurance, I am fortunate to be able to follow my dentist's recommendations and give my child regular fluoride treatments. But too many hardworking families cannot afford this basic preventative measure, and their children are twice as likely to suffer from dental disease.

With fluoridated water, all of our children will have the same opportunity to start life with healthy teeth.

During my four years on Council, no issue has generated so much passion... on both sides. Thanks to all those who took the time to testify, send me email, or call my office.

Thanks especially to the Everyone Deserves Healthy Teeth Coalition for bringing this issue forward, and Upstream Public Health and its Co-Director Raquel Burnhonesque for their leadership.