

## Fluoridation

On August 7, 2006 the assembly committee of the whole received the final report of the CBJ Fluoride Study Commission which was first appointed in June 2004. Three members recommended continuing municipal water fluoridation in the range of 0.7 to 0.9 mg/L, believing that such fluoridation to be safe and effective in helping to prevent dental caries. Two members opposed continued fluoridation, contending that fluoridation is potentially harmful and that its effectiveness against dental caries is doubtful. The commission Chair concluded that the available evidence slightly supported the argument that fluoridation is safe and effective, but that the studies to date did not adequately address the effects of fluoridation in the volumes used by municipalities. As a result, the level of uncertainty was too high for him to support a recommendation for continued fluoridation.

The assembly is persuaded by Chairman Rozell's conclusions, which are set forth in more detail here:

In summary, I find the evidence concerning the effectiveness and safety of municipal fluoridation to be inconclusive. In reviewing the available scientific studies as an engineer, I find that the evidence tends to support fluoridation, but that the studies done so far are inadequate and further examination is required before final conclusions can be drawn. In reviewing the evidence as a lawyer, I believe a preponderance of the evidence supports fluoridation, but the evidence does not meet a higher, clear and convincing standard. Since I do not find the evidence supporting fluoridation to be compelling, I think the City and Borough of Juneau should follow the maxim, "first, do no harm." I recommend that Juneau discontinue water fluoridation until further studies of the kind advocated by the National Research Council address the issues of the safety and effectiveness against dental caries of water fluoridation in the 0.7 to 1.2 mg/L range.

Separately, on September 11, 2006 the city attorney advised that no ordinance is required to authorize the Manager to fluoridate; doing so (or not) is within the Manager's general authority to operate and maintain all municipal public works.<sup>1</sup> The city attorney noted: "The decision to put fluoride in the municipal water system, like the decision to put chlorine into the water system, is an operational decision made by municipal and public

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<sup>1</sup> The City Manager is the chief administrative officer of the CBJ. CBJ Charter, Section 4.5. One of the City Manager's required duties is to "[d]irect and supervise the construction, maintenance, and operation of municipal public works." CBJ Charter, Section 4.5(c). The municipal water system is operated by the Public Works Department and is one of the municipal public works. CBJ 03.10.050 provides that the Public Works Department "shall be responsible for...[t]he maintenance and operation of all municipal public works, including street, water, and sewer systems."

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works professionals, exercising their professional judgment on how to best maintain and operate the municipal water system.”

The assembly commends to the manager Chairman Rozell’s recommendation and requests that he act accordingly.