ORIGINAL

SWEETWATER SPRINGS WATER DISTRICT

TO: Board of Directors **AGENDA NO. V-D**

FROM: Steve Mack, General Manager

Meeting Date: December 4, 2008

Subject: FLUORIDATION INFORMATION

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Receive information on fluoridation of public water supplies

FISCAL IMPACT: None

DISCUSSION:

At the November 2008 meeting a request was made to have information on fluoridation of public water supplies presented at the December 2008 meeting. Attached is an article from the Santa Rosa Press Democrat reporting on a Sonoma County Supervisors debate forum prior to the recent elections that reported on the candidates positions on fluoridation – most were in favor.

The Internet has a wealth of information on fluoridation. Below are two examples of what one may find:

From the California Department of Public Health:

Fluoride is one of the most plentiful elements on earth, and occurs naturally in water supplies throughout California and elsewhere. When fluoride is present in drinking water at optimal levels, it has been shown to promote oral health by preventing tooth decay. Water systems are considered naturally fluoridated when the natural level of fluoride is greater than 0.7 parts per million (ppm). When a water system adjusts the level of fluoride to 0.7–1.2 ppm it is referred to as water fluoridation. Today, about 67 percent of the U.S. population on public water supplies has access to fluoridated water.

Benefits of Fluoridation

- Water fluoridation ranks as one of ten great public health achievements of the 20th century according to the Surgeon General 2000.

- All drinking water naturally contains some fluoride. Community water fluoridation is the process of adjusting the naturally occurring fluoride level to the optimum level for preventing tooth decay.

- Adults, as well as children, benefit from drinking fluoridated water throughout their lives.

- More than half (62%) of the U.S. population live in communities served by fluoridated water supplies.

- Community water fluoridation has the endorsement of every major health organization in the United States and many other countries, as well as every Surgeon General for the past 50 years.

- The concentration of fluoride in community drinking water is controlled within plus or minus 0.1 parts per million and represents no health hazards.

- Every $1 spent on fluoridation saves $38 in dental treatment costs.

Websites that support fluoridation and provide information:

American Dental Association -*www.ada.org/public/topics/fluoride/facts*

California Department of Health Services - www.cdph.ca.gov/CERTLIC/DRINKINGWATER/Pages/Fluoridation.aspx

Center for Disease Control - *www.cdc.gov/nohss/guideFL.htm*

North Coast Fluoride Information Network - *www.fluorideinfo.org*

There's a contrary view -

- Any purported benefits of fluoridation are in scientific controversy. Studies from 50 years ago do not pass muster under today's standards for safety or effectiveness. Research from the same era also "proved" *cigarettes* don't cause cancer.

- The fluoride used for water fluoridation does not have FDA approval and is considered by the FDA as an "unapproved drug". The proper use of any drug requires an understanding of how much is too much. Since fluoride is already in many foods and beverages, an estimated total intake of existing fluoride amounts is imperative. Research shows fluoridation is unnecessary since we're already receiving 300% or more of the American Dental Association's recommended daily amount.

- Constitutional and Civil liberty issues regarding the forced mass medication of the population when alternative means of reducing cavities are easily available, such as tooth brushing. Even so-called

mandatory school immunizations provide exemptions for parents who wish not to participate.

- The chemicals used for fluoridation are not high purity, pharmaceutical quality products. Rather they are byproducts of aluminum and fertilizer manufacturing and contain a high concentration of toxins and heavy metals such as *arsenic, lead and chromium*. All proven to be carcinogens.

Source: http://www.nofluoride.com/

The Department of Public Health lists over 250 water agencies that provide fluoridated water. In Sonoma County, the City of Healdsburg adds fluoride to its water and a small water system called Sonoma County #41 Fitch Mountain receives fluoridated water from the City of Healdsburg. The optimum level that the City of Healdsburg targets is 0.8 mg/L. Sweetwater Springs Water District raw water samples have naturally occurring fluoride in the range of 0.2 mg/L.

The California Legislature passed Assembly Bill 733 in 1995, requiring fluoridation for all communities with water systems having at least 25,000 people, if funding is provided. The District is below that threshold but might be able to tap into the funding mechanism, if we so desire. Fluoridation by the District would require two fluoride injection stations for the Guerneville and Monte Rio systems. The cost for such a setup is unknown but because grant funding would likely be available, the cost to the District for the capital improvements would be minimal. The raw material for fluoride injection is a hazardous material and requires special handling. Annual costs for the material is also unknown but is not expected to be a significant added cost. Grant funding is probably not be available for ongoing operations.

Supervisor hopefuls debate kids' needs

By BLEYS W. ROSE
THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

Published: Thursday, October 16, 2008 at 4:42 a.m.
Last Modified: Thursday, October 16, 2008 at 5:02 p.m.

In the campaign's most tightly focused debate, six candidates for three seats on the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors on Wednesday addressed children's issues ranging from gangs to obesity and tooth decay.

The two-hour session sponsored by the Sonoma County Child Abuse Prevention Council attracted about 60 people representing about 100 nonprofit agencies that deal with youth.

"A measure of our community is how our children are doing," said Robin Bowen, executive director of the California Parenting Institute.

By that yardstick, most of the candidates at the forum held at the county library in downtown Santa Rosa said county government could do better.

Most agreed that fluoride should be added to the water supply to help prevent tooth decay. Rue Furch and Efren Carrillo, candidates in the 5th District, were in favor. In the 3rd District race, Sharon Wright agreed, and her challenger, Shirlee Zane, said her study of fluoride's health benefits caused her to change her position from undecided to support.

However, Will Pier, candidate in the 1st District, said he preferred that the water agency dispense fluoride tablets. Valerie Brown, incumbent in the 1st District, had left the debate for another commitment, but has previously said she is undecided until the public health department reports on Healdsburg's experience with fluoride. **(underlining added, sm)**