



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30333

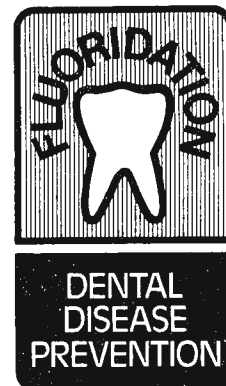
Refer: FL-110
April 1979

Food and Drug Administration Director Supports
Community Water Fluoridation

It has come to our attention that a letter written 10 years ago by Dr. Donald Kennedy, now Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, is being used to indicate his opposition to community water fluoridation. This was brought to Dr. Kennedy's attention and his letter of response is quoted in its entirety.

Dental Disease Prevention Activity
Bureau of State Services

Enclosure





DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20857

April 10, 1979

Dr. William Taylor
Chairman
Governor's Task Force on Fluorides
State Capitol
Lansing, Michigan 48902

Dear Dr. Taylor:

Dr. John Greene has shared with me a copy of a remarkable letter from a Ms. Darlene Sherrell, which apparently is being circulated to Governor Miliken's Task Force on Fluoride. It purports to represent me as opposed to fluoridation, and describes a letter of mine to Consumers Union written ten years ago as "anti-fluoridation".

As you will see from reading the letter in question, it was actually a short letter of introduction written on behalf of one of our graduate students and signed jointly by Dr. Ehrlich and me. I can understand that the last sentence of the letter could, apart from that context, be billed as an "anti-fluoridation" message. I therefore welcome an opportunity to clarify the views I held then, and those I hold now.

At the time, as my letter to Consumer Reports indicates, I felt that Groth developed a strong case that in the historical debate over the scientific merits of fluoridation, inadequate attention was given to some thoughtful views opposing such programs. I still think that is probably true; it is a phenomenon that often characterizes the adoption of public policies favoring new technologies. I did not believe that fluoridation was unwise; only that the case for its safety was not as clear as its most enthusiastic proponents claimed. That is quite different, as you will recognize, from opposing fluoridation.

Certainly nothing that has happened in the intervening decade has raised any serious challenges to the public health wisdom of fluoridation. Epidemiology, along with other sciences, has improved greatly in quality and resolving power in the last ten years. Recent studies have failed to expose a relationship between cancer and fluoridation. I therefore support the optimal fluoridation of community water supplies, and intend to urge Ms. Sherrell and others to stop misrepresenting my position on the matter.

Sincerely yours,

Donald Kennedy
Commissioner of Food and Drugs

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Craig Nern
Ms. Darlene Sherrell