

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

Public Health Service

National Institutes of Health

Refer: PPB-51
February 1973

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY SUPPORTS FLUORIDATION

Opponents of fluoridation frequently allege that fluoridation is pollution and may have detrimental environmental effects. In response to such allegations the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has issued the following statement:

Since the safety and efficacy of water fluoridation have been well established, the Environmental Protection Agency endorses the principles of such practice.

The Environmental Protection Agency does not consider the adjustment of the fluoride content of drinking water for purposes of dental decay reduction to be a form of pollution. By definition, water pollution is the addition of a substance to water which makes such water unfit for its intended use. Since adjusting the natural fluoride content of drinking water to a level which is optimal for the reduction of dental decay does in no way make the water unfit for drinking, water fluoridation cannot be considered to be pollution.

At the concentrations used in water fluoridation, the fluoride ion has no detrimental effects on the environment. Fluoride is a natural constituent of fresh water, soil, sea water and most living organisms, often at higher concentrations than are used in water fluoridation. A recent study on the environmental impact of fluorides, conducted by the National Research Council under contract to the Environmental Protection Agency, has confirmed that the only hazard to our environment from fluorides is from industrial discharges.

Division of Dental Health
Preventive Practices Branch
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, Maryland 20014