

# Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-1326

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S

**Title:** RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING FOOD SAFETY AND ORAL HEALTH.

**Vote Date:** 3/12/2025

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 2/26/2025

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

The Public Health Committee.

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill codifies the recommendations of the federal Health and Human Services (HHS) agency regarding fluoride levels in public drinking water and codifies the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) model food code approved as of December 31, 2024. The latter allows the Department of Public Health (DPH) to adopt any food code supplement it sees fit. While both are currently in statute, this bill allows the state to deviate from federal recommendations as it sees fit.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

### **Manisha Juthani, Commissioner, CT Department of Public Health (DPH):**

DPH supports SB 1326. Section 1 of the bill would codify in statute our current water fluoridation standard. The overwhelming weight of evidence published on water fluoridation, as well as decades of experience, has shown that fluoridation at these levels is safe and substantially improves oral health by preventing tooth decay. Preserving these current standards will ensure that we can maintain the progress we've made in the fight against tooth decay. Regarding section 2, since the unanimous passage of Public Act 17-93, the department has worked to update our regulations and train local health departments in these standards. Any changes made so soon after the full adoption of the model food code risk rolling back important health and safety work done by the department and our partners at local health departments and districts. Codifying this is an important step in protecting these standards.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

### **Elizabeth Gara, Executive Director, Connecticut Water Works Association:**

The current standard requiring water companies serving 20,000 or more persons to maintain an average monthly fluoride content was adopted after considerable research, peer review, and public comment. This standard is intended to appropriately balance fluoridation to prevent tooth decay while limiting the risk of dental fluorosis.

### **Nicole Brasil Becker, DMD, Cosmetic and Implant Dentistry of Connecticut:**

Fluoride in public water supplies is a well-established public health measure that helps prevent tooth decay, especially among children, seniors, and underserved populations. By reinforcing state control over water management, this bill ensures that Connecticut maintains science-based oral health policies and prevents external efforts to remove fluoride from municipal water supplies.

### **Molly Markowitz, MD, FAAP Chair of the Advocacy Committee of the CT-American Academy of Pediatrics Chapter (AAP):**

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) advocates for community water fluoridation as an important strategy for the prevention of dental cavities in children. Water fluoridation is a safe and cost-effective way to decrease the occurrence of dental caries in children.

### **Trisha Pitter, Vice President of the Board of Directors, Connecticut Oral Health Initiative (COHI):**

For many individuals with autism, fluoride is helpful and essential. Studies show that children with autism experience higher rates of cavities and gum disease due to sensory aversions and difficulty maintaining daily oral hygiene. Untreated dental issues contribute to systemic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and nutrition deficiencies. Without fluoride, the financial burden of untreated cavities would fall on families and communities.

### **Others in support of this bill:**

- Adam J. Kennedy, DMD, FAGD.
- Annemarie DeLessio-Matta DMD, Pediatric Dental Associates of Southbury.
- Sandra Ferreira-Molina, MSM, MBA Policy and Advocacy Director Ct Oral Health Initiative.
- Steven D Ureles, DMD, MSc (Ox), MS, FICD Children's Dental Associates of New London.
- Darnell Young, DMD, True Pediatric Dental Care.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

### **Kristina Berthelius:**

This proposal is not only unnecessary but also dangerous. An increasing number of states and municipalities across the country have banned or reduced fluoride in drinking water due to growing concerns over its health effects. The National Toxicology Program (NTP) released findings in 2023 indicating that fluoride is a developmental neurotoxin with potential links to lower IQ, neurodevelopment damage, and thyroid dysfunction. SB 1326 is a step in the wrong direction for public health. With states and countries actively rejecting fluoridation, why is Connecticut moving toward increasing it?

### **Kevin Dumas, Fire Lieutenant:**

Several states and major cities across the U.S. have moved away from mandatory fluoridation after reviewing the latest scientific research on its potential risks. Growing scientific evidence suggests that fluoride is not the harmless additive it was once believed to be. Adding fluoride to drinking water violates the principles of medical ethics and personal choice. Unlike fluoride found in toothpaste, which people can choose to use or avoid, fluoridated water is forced upon all residents without consent, proper dosing control, or consideration for individual health conditions. It's time to follow the science, respect personal choice, and put the health of Connecticut residents first.

### **Others in opposition to this bill:**

- Rev. Shirley R Bloethe
- Erica Smith
- Sonja Murphy
- Patricia Spooner
- Selina Rifkin

**Reported by: David Rackliffe**

**Date: March 13, 2025**