

My name is Robert Schuett. I am a construction law lawyer in town and I manage a local, medium-sized firm. I am here as a layperson, so I am happy to cede my extra time to the many experts that are here today. However, I would like to say a few words.

As a father of young children and someone that is generally interested in participating in public policy discussions, I am a passionate advocate for the re-adjustment of fluoridation in Calgary's water. Over the last few years I have had the opportunity to read many articles and studies on this issue, much more than I ever thought I would have cared to read. And, I've been fortunate to have had the opportunity to speak to most of you on this topic.

From a read through the O'Brien institute report, it seems that there are no surprises. Like almost anything in life, too much fluoride can be bad and too little is insufficient to provide the benefits sought. Therefore, it is about striking the right balance. Actually, I don't see it as much different from ~~this~~ ^{Council's} committees work with respect to the adjustment of speed limits in residential communities. Obviously, excessive speed is not an option but not driving, at least at this time, is not really an option either. Again, it's about finding the right balance that provides the maximum amount of protection and security for the community.

With respect to fluoride, again I'm not an expert, but it seems clear from a bit of reading, even to a layperson, that water fluoridation occurring at over 1 ppm is too much and potentially harmful whereas our current, naturally occurring fluoridation levels of 0.7 ppm is insufficient to provide our community with any oral health benefits. However, it sounds like the North American standard fluoridation level of 0.7 ppm strikes that necessary balance. Perhaps in the future the levels may require further adjusting but, as decision makers you can only be responsible for making decisions on the information before you and at this time the information from ^{our local} health authorities ^{right across the country} states that 0.7 ppm is an acceptable, safe level of water fluoridation that will provide oral health benefits.

It's my understanding that the upgrade to the infrastructure that will allow for the fluoride levels to be adjusted in the water will require several million dollars of spending. In our current economic situation I believe that this would be welcome spending by the community. The general community will feel the impacts of savings in dental costs that it will provide to each family, it's estimated that is somewhere between \$1 and \$135 for every dollar spent (Centre for Disease Control). And, the construction industry, the industry with which I am most familiar, could very much use an infrastructure project of this size, which would allow local general contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers to bid on every aspect of this project.

Finally, I know that some of you believe that as a public health issue this is beyond the city's jurisdiction. I agree that a much larger discussion on oral hygiene and public health must take place at some point but, until we have a government, either federally or provincially, that is willing to have that discussion, this is a step that most municipalities throughout North America believe to be within their power and is able to provide a positive impact to the oral health of young kids, as well as others.

And, I will add one last request, if you are uncertain of which direction the City should take then please, let the community decide. This has been put to a plebiscite numerous times in our City's history and the most recent removal was done without a clear mandate to do so. If Council is indecisive on this issue, then I respectfully request that you include this as a question on the ballot in 2021.

Thank you for listening to me today.

In response to Councillor Woolley's question or comment regarding the downloading of costs associated to water fluoridation, I agree, perhaps the province is downloading the costs and perhaps it isn't fair. But, failing to act at the municipal level, essentially only downloads these costs to the parents and the children that cannot afford it. And, we know, that ^{every dollar of} investment in water fluoridation represents a return on investment of between \$1 to \$1.35 of savings.

CITY OF CALGARY
RECEIVED
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER
OCT 29 2019
ITEM: #16.1 CPS2019-0965
Public Distribution
CITY CLERK'S DEPARTMENT