



Memo

January 24, 2019

To: Councillor Farkas
From: Dan Limacher, Director, Water Services
Re: **Administrative Inquiry – Water Fluoridation at The City of Calgary**

This memo is in response to your Administrative Inquiry regarding the background and timelines, capital and operating information, of water fluoridation at The City, as raised during Combined Council session on January 14th, 2019. The historical background and the capital and operating budgetary impacts of fluoridation are summarized below.

Background and Timelines

In 1989, Calgarians voted via plebiscite in favour of adding fluoride to The City of Calgary's drinking water. Subsequently, City Council directed Administration to amend The City's Operating Approval for drinking water treatment plants with the Alberta Environment to include fluoridation.

Commencing in 1991, Calgary began adding fluoride to its drinking water at a target of 1.0 mg/L. In 1998, The City of Calgary and Calgary Regional Health Authority (now Alberta Health Services) sponsored a review of water fluoridation as a public policy and a panel of five experts was appointed. The review recommended the reduction of the level of fluoride from 1.0 mg/L to 0.7 mg/L. This recommendation was adopted in 1998 and implemented in 1999.

A plebiscite in 1998 (as part of the municipal election) determined that the public still supported fluoridation with 55 per cent of the people who voted (136,697) replying "yes" to the question "*Are you in favour of continuing the fluoridation of the municipal water supply?*".

In 2011, a motion was passed by Council to repeal the fluoridation bylaw and Administration was directed to apply to Alberta Environment for an amendment of The City's License to reflect the discontinuation of the addition of fluoride in Calgary's water supply. Fluoridation was discontinued May 2011.

Capital and Operation Budget Information

The Operating savings associated with the cessation of fluoridation in the water system was around \$750,000 (2011 dollars) and is primarily related to chemical costs.

On the Capital side of the budget, the estimate replacement value of the fluoridation system for The City was approximately \$6 million (2011 dollars).

Conclusion

Should Council direct Administration to investigate the costs to add fluoride to the water supply, Administration would need to conduct a detailed review of operational and capital cost requirements, as well as considerations to revisions to the Operating Approvals and Bylaws.



Memo

Should you have any further questions regarding water fluoridation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dan Limacher".

Dan Limacher, P. Eng
Director, Water Services

CC:
David Duckworth, General Manager, Utilities & Environmental Protection