

Response to Proposition 65 Hearing Fluoride and its salts

Representatives of the California Dental Association, CDA Foundation, and California Statewide Fluoridation Advisory Council attended a hearing of the California Office of Environment Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) on May 29, which discussed the prioritization of 38 compounds, including fluoride and its salts, for review by the agency's Carcinogen Identification Committee.

CDA and its partners strongly support the use of fluorides in professional dental office applications, over-the-counter consumer products, and community water fluoridation as important components for preventing dental disease. We encourage OEHHA to immediately begin the review of fluoride and are extremely confident that a thorough review of the scientific evidence will affirm the continued use of fluoride as a safe and effective oral health preventive measure.

OEHHA is the lead agency for the implementation of the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, and periodically screens candidate chemicals for inclusion in the Proposition 65 list of chemicals. Fluoride was identified, along with 37 other compounds, from a total of 80, principally because of "its important widespread use," as characterized by the chair of the committee, Dr. Thomas Mack. Dr. Mack also noted on behalf of the committee that ranking a compound as a high priority in no way signifies there is an indication that it is carcinogenic.

Despite the claims of a small number of activists, the use of fluorides are safe and effective. Backed by a 65-year record of practical experience and scholarly research, community water fluoridation has won the endorsement of more than 100 national and international health organizations, from the American Academy of Pediatrics to the World Health Organization. Studies show overwhelmingly that the use of fluorides can reduce the amount of dental decay by as much as 60%.

CDA is firmly committed to the use of fluoride to prevent tooth decay, and commends health professionals and local communities that are taking steps to protect the oral health of their residents. The public deserves to have confidence that fluoride is safe and effective.