

ENERGY, TRANSPORTATION, AND ENVIRONMENT

Resolution ETE-13-02

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY WATER FLUORIDATION

WHEREAS, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) recognizes the importance of oral health to the overall health and well-being of children and adults;

WHEREAS, dental disease, which may affect the teeth, gums, or other tissues and parts of the mouth, is the most common chronic childhood disease in the United States and is five times more prevalent than asthma;

WHEREAS, optimally fluoridated water reduces rates of tooth decay among children and adults by between 18 and 40 percent;

WHEREAS, for 65 years, community water fluoridation has distinguished itself as a safe and cost-effective way to prevent tooth decay and has been shown to reduce disparities in tooth decay rates that exist by race, ethnicity, and income;

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recognized water fluoridation as one of the 10 greatest public health achievements of the 20th century and estimates that for most cities, each dollar spent on water fluoridation saves \$38 in dental costs and related treatment;

WHEREAS, more than 204 million people in the United States are served by community water supplies containing enough fluoride to protect teeth;

WHEREAS, leading health organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Dental Association, the American Medical Association, the National Dental Association, and the Hispanic Dental Association, have recognized the health benefits of community water fluoridation;

WHEREAS, after examining more than 2.2 million cancer death records and 125,000 cancer case records in counties using fluoridated water, the National Research Council found no indication of increased cancer risk associated with fluoridated drinking water;

WHEREAS, even though more Americans have access to community water fluoridation than ever before, coverage is uneven, and less than 50 percent of those on public water supplies receive recommended fluoride levels; and

WHEREAS, only 20 states currently receive CDC oral health infrastructure grants for prevention activities such as community water fluoridation.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) recognizes the importance of community water fluoridation as a safe, cost-effective public health intervention proven to prevent tooth decay and reduce oral health disparities;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL urges state and local governments to implement and maintain optimal levels of water fluoridation in public water supplies;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL calls for further studies to be done on the long-term health and effectiveness of water fluoridation to gain more information on the issue, and allow for improved distribution;

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL calls upon the United States Congress to provide full funding for Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) oral health infrastructure grants to all 50 states as authorized by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) of 2010; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the United States Surgeon General, and the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials as appropriate.

SPONSOR: Representative Alan Williams (FL)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Energy, Transportation, and Environment Policy Committee

Certified by Committee Chair: Representative Dee Dawkins-Haigler (GA)

Ratified in Plenary Session: Ratification Date is December 7, 2012

Ratification is certified by: Representative Barbara W. Ballard (KS), President