
Meeting Date: August 17, 2016
Staff Contact: Mark S. Sanchez, Executive Director

TITLE: R-16-9 - Resolution Formally Requesting that the Bernalillo County Board of Commissioners Submit a Ballot Question to the General Election Voters Concerning the Addition of Supplemental Fluoride to Water Authority Drinking Water

BACKGROUND:

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Federal Panel on Community Water Fluoridation has issued a final recommendation which concludes that the optimal concentration of fluoride in drinking water is 0.7 milligrams/liter (mg/L). According to the report, drinking water with fluoride in concentrations of 0.7mg/L provides the best balance of protection from dental caries while limiting the risk of dental fluorosis.

http://www.publichealthreports.org/documents/PHS_2015_Fluoride_Guidelines.pdf

The drinking water currently served by the Water Authority naturally contains fluoride from ground water sources in an average concentration of 0.5 mg/L. To meet the 0.7 mg/L recommended fluoride standard would require that the Water Authority change current practice and begin to add supplemental fluoride to the drinking water. Funding to allow the Water Authority to begin a supplemental fluoride program was included in the FY17 budget proposed by staff. The proposed appropriation for supplemental fluoride generated substantial public interest and controversy concerning the advisability of supplemental fluoride. Ultimately, the Board removed the appropriations for both the one-time \$250,000 equipment purchase and the \$250,000 of first year chemical costs necessary for the supplemental fluoride program from the approved FY17 budget appropriation.

SUMMARY:

Councilor Sanchez requested a legal opinion on who has the authority and when to submit this question to the voters. The Resolution requested by Councilor Sanchez finds that whether or not the majority of the voters favor or oppose the addition of supplemental fluoride to Water Authority drinking water to meet the 0.7 mg/L public health recommendation is an unsettled question and of general public interest in Bernalillo County.

Because of this finding, the Resolution requests that the Bernalillo County Commission submit to County voters in the November 2016 general election a ballot question to determine if voters favor or oppose the addition of supplemental fluoride to the drinking water distributed by the Water Authority. For the ballot question to be timely submitted for the November 2016, it must be acted upon by the Bernalillo County Commission no later than the Commission's August 23, 2016 meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Passage of the Resolution has no fiscal impact to Water Authority. Because it requests the addition of a ballot question to an already scheduled election, it should not have a fiscal impact on State and County budgets.

BILL NO. R-16-9