



COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORT PUBLIC UTILITY COMMITTEE

Date: June 17, 2015

Agenda Item #: 4

Agenda Item: *Staff briefing, invited testimony, and policy decision to consider a resolution on stopping the addition of fluoridation to treated water.*

Vote: *There was a motion made by Council Member Kitchen and seconded by Council Member Troxclair to bring this item back before the Public Utilities Committee in August and have experts testify in regards to fluoridation. Motion was approved on a 3-0-0-1 vote. Council Member Garza, Chair, was absent.*

Original Sponsors/Department: *This item was brought forward by Council Member Zimmerman.*

Summary of Discussion

Council Committee members, City staff and field experts discussed: the pros and cons of ingesting fluoride or using a topical fluoride application, the effect of ingesting more fluoride during summer months versus winter months and the City's capability of modifying fluoridation levels during summer months; the historical reason for adding fluoride in the water and the pros and cons from a public health perspective; the dangers of acute toxicity; and the effect of fluoride to sensitive (babies, and adolescents) and general populations.

Jane Burazer, Assistant Director, Austin Water and Janet Pichette, Chief Epidemiologist, Health and Human Services provided an overview on the City's decision to fluoridate Austin's Water. In accordance to a referendum (Resolution 720917-11) and Resolution 20111215-011, the City continues to comply with the recommendations in both resolutions. Ms. Burazer mentioned that in 2014, the City spent \$339,720 to fluoridate the water which is equivalent to .38 cents per person for fluoridation.

Justin Armond, Executive Director of Texans for Accountable Government provided copies of a booklet named "Water Fluoridation Resolution Compendium" to members of the Public Utilities committee. He provided a brief summary about the effects of fluoride, the prevalence and severity of dental fluorosis in the U.S., and Topical vs. Systemic use of fluoride.

Drs. Neil Carman, PhD, and Griffin Cole, DDS NMD were invited as guest speakers to give testimony in support of eliminating fluoride in Austin's water supply. Dr. Carman gave a presentation on the "Health Effects of Hazardous Fluoride", and Dr. Cole gave a presentation on "Fluoridation – Ineffective and Unsafe".

After the briefings, Council committee members expressed an interest in knowing of any cities within the United States that have taken steps to remove fluoride from their water. They want staff to find out the approach that was taken to make this happen, and any impact to citizens from a public perspective. Committee members asked to receive this information at the next PUC meeting.

Ms. Pichette is expected to give a copy of the July/August 2015 CDC Study Report to committee members. The report will help address and provide answers to some of the new studies that have come out on fluoridation. Ms. Pichette will also invite representatives from Capital Area Dental Society, and Texas Dental Association to the next PUC meeting to help debate points.

Council Member Zimmerman presented a draft resolution in support of the elimination of fluoride in Austin's water supply. Committee members are not ready to support the language in the resolution. Council Members Troxclair and Kitchen want more time to review and hear additional testimonies from staff and citizens before making a decision.

Public Comments

Several speakers appeared before the committee in support of repealing and rescinding resolutions 720817-11 and 20111215-011. They are in favor of eliminating the addition of artificial fluoride, including hydrofluorosilicic acid, sodium fluoride, sodium fluorosilicate or any other methods of fluoridation to the City of Austin's water supply.

The following citizens signed up to speak: Rae Nadler-Olenick (Fluoride Free Austin), Steve Hanna, Christine Shaw, Walter Olenick, Laura Pressley, Cathy Leman, Jeffrey D. Solomon (Fluoride Free Austin), Julie Minnis, Linda Greene (Fluoride Free Austin), Heather Fazio, Hester Pollard (Fluoride Free Austin), Mary C. Krenek (Fluoride Free Austin), Gayle Borst, William R. Doyle, Emilio Chronis, Krista Clark, G. Joseph Geaccone, Chuck Thomas (Texans for Accountable Government), John Daisley, David King, Marion Mlotok, Mel Layton, Nancy Reed, Ellie Phillips, Madeleine Villatoro, Mitchell Stein, Julie Williams, Jonathan Colwell

Direction

The Public Utilities Committee members voted to bring this item back before the Public Utilities Committee in August 2015. There will be an edited version of the draft resolution presented to the Committee, and there should be an expectation for another Public Hearing.

Recommendation:

- *Return this item to the next Public Utility Committee meeting – August 19, 2015*
- *Invite representatives from Capital Area Dental Society, and Texas Department Dental Association to the next Public Utility Committee meeting to debate key points.*
- *Provide the July/August 2015 CDC Study Report to Council Committee members*
- *Revise the draft resolution to include language that directs the City Manager to provide a report to the Committee with options regarding fluoride.*