

January 27, 2026

Housing Standing Committee on Local Government
Representative Patrick Flannery
Kentucky State Capitol
700 Capital Ave. Frankfort, KY 40601

Chair Flannery and Members of the House Standing Committee on Local Government,

I write in support of the proposed amendment to KRS 211.190 that would make water fluoridation programs optional and place decision-making on participation in the hands of local governing bodies.

I strongly support public health efforts, and I also believe that locally owned and operated water systems are best positioned to evaluate the operational, financial, and community impacts of fluoridation. Water systems across the Commonwealth differ greatly in capacity and resources, and local officials are accountable to the communities they serve when making infrastructure and treatment decisions.

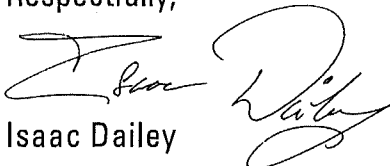
Fluoride is regulated at the federal level, with the Environmental Protection Agency establishing maximum allowable levels in drinking water to protect public health. The fact that fluoride is monitored within contaminant standards underscores the importance of careful handling, dosing, and system-specific considerations, further supporting the role of local governance in determining whether participation is appropriate for a given system.

It is worth noting that many developed countries, including much of Europe, do not fluoridate public water systems and instead rely on alternative dental health strategies. This demonstrates that mass water fluoridation is not the only effective approach to improving oral health outcomes.

This legislation does not eliminate fluoridation; it simply ensures that participation is a local decision rather than a mandate. I appreciate that the bill preserves existing programs unless a local governing body takes action and provides liability protections for decisions made in good faith and in reasonable reliance on information. These provisions support responsible governance and transparent decision-making.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to Kentucky's local governments.

Respectfully,



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