

JAN 17 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO WATER FLUORIDATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that increasing the
2 concentration of fluoride, a naturally occurring mineral, in the
3 State's water supply to an optimal level promotes good oral
4 health to prevent or even reverse tooth decay. The practice of
5 community water fluoridation benefits all people who drink from
6 the public water supply.

7 The legislature recognizes that according to the federal
8 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), water
9 fluoridation is both safe and the most cost-effective way of
10 preventing tooth decay. This success of water fluoridation in
11 relation to decreased rates of tooth decay has led the CDC to
12 name community water fluoridation as one of the ten great public
13 health achievements of the twentieth century. Since 1945,
14 hundreds of cities have implemented community water
15 fluoridation. As of 2018, over two hundred million people, or
16 seventy-three per cent of the United States' population served
17 by community water systems, consumed water with enough fluoride



1 to prevent tooth decay. Drinking water with the optimal
2 fluoride concentration keeps teeth strong, lowers the risk of
3 cavities, and reduces tooth decay by approximately twenty-five
4 per cent in both children and adults. The value of water
5 fluoridation has been recognized internationally and is used in
6 many countries, including Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia,
7 Ireland, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the United
8 Kingdom.

9 Presently, the State's public water systems have no added
10 fluoride, with the exception of military bases. Consequently,
11 only eleven per cent of individuals in the State have access to
12 the benefits of fluoridated drinking water. However, the
13 State's drinking water already has additional chlorine, which is
14 chemically similar to fluoride, in its water supply for the
15 purpose of reducing exposure to water borne illnesses.

16 According to "Hawaii Smiles 2015: The Oral Health of
17 Hawaii's Children", a report from the department of health, the
18 State has the highest prevalence of tooth decay among third
19 graders in the United States. More than seventy per cent of
20 third graders in the State are affected by tooth decay, which is
21 a substantially higher rate than the national average of fifty-



1 two per cent. The State also received a failing grade in three
2 recent oral health report cards published by the Pew Center on
3 the States, a division of the Pew Charitable Trusts.

4 The legislature further finds that many state residents do
5 not have dental care insurance. Among those on medicaid managed
6 care plans, children generally receive dental services as a
7 covered benefit, while the majority of adults do not receive
8 dental benefits. According to "Hawaii Oral Health: Key
9 Findings", another 2015 report from the department of health,
10 the number of emergency room visits for preventable dental
11 problems has increased. For example, in 2012, there were more
12 than three thousand visits to hospital emergency rooms in the
13 State for preventable dental problems, representing a sixty-
14 seven per cent increase since 2006, and forty-five per cent
15 higher than the increase seen in the United States nationally
16 during the same period. Therefore, water fluoridation may
17 address ongoing oral health issues across the State by providing
18 communities with enough fluoride in local water systems to
19 prevent cavities.

20 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:



- 1 (1) Require certain suppliers of water with one thousand
2 of more service connections in the State to adjust the
3 level of fluoride in their respective public water
4 systems to the optimal fluoride level for community
5 water fluoridation established by the United States
6 Department of Health and Human Services;
- 7 (2) Require each public water supplier in the State to
8 conduct periodic tests of water fluoridation at
9 intervals established by the department of health; and
- 10 (3) Require the department of health to submit annual
11 reports to the legislature on the fluoride
12 concentration levels across the State.

13 SECTION 2. Chapter 340E, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
14 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
15 and to read as follows:

16 "§340E- Water fluoridation; testing; report. (a) Any
17 supplier of water in the State with one thousand or more service
18 connections, whether the supplier is a privately-owned or
19 governmental entity, shall adjust the level of fluoride in their
20 respective public water systems to the optimal fluoride level
21 for community water fluoridation established by the United



1 States Department of Health and Human Services; provided that
2 this section shall not apply to any federal agency operating a
3 public water system in the State.

4 (b) Each supplier of water shall monitor and sample for
5 fluoride in water systems periodically at intervals established
6 by the department. Each supplier of water shall report results
7 of sampling required under this subsection to the department.

8 (c) The department shall provide each supplier of water
9 subject to this section with technical assistance and training
10 relating to community water fluoridation and the management of
11 fluoridation systems.

12 (d) The department shall submit a report regarding its
13 findings and recommendations on fluoride concentration levels in
14 private and government-owned water systems across the State,
15 including any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later
16 than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular
17 session."

18 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

19 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY: 



S.B. NO. 488

Report Title:

DOH; Water Fluoridation; Exemption; Water Testing; Training; Reports

Description:

Requires certain water suppliers in the State to adjust the fluoride level in their public water systems to the applicable United States Department of Health and Human Services standards for optimal water fluoridation levels. Exempts federal water suppliers. Requires water suppliers to test water systems for fluoride levels at intervals established by the Department of Health. Requires the Department of Health to provide training to water suppliers for the implementation of water fluoridation. Requires the Department of Health to submit annual reports to the Legislature.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

