

## Alexandra Lowder

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**Subject:** RE: Online Form Submittal: Contact the Town

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**From:** [noreply@civicplus.com](mailto:noreply@civicplus.com) <[noreply@civicplus.com](mailto:noreply@civicplus.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 11:40 PM

**To:** Paula Mirabella <[PMirabella@tewksbury-ma.gov](mailto:PMirabella@tewksbury-ma.gov)>; Amy Ryan <[aryan@tewksbury-ma.gov](mailto:aryan@tewksbury-ma.gov)>; John Curran <[jcurran@tewksbury-ma.gov](mailto:jcurran@tewksbury-ma.gov)>; Health <[health@tewksbury-ma.gov](mailto:health@tewksbury-ma.gov)>

**Subject:** Online Form Submittal: Contact the Town

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### Contact the Town

Name April Lowell McCreary

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Email [April.Lowell@gmail.com](mailto:April.Lowell@gmail.com)

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What Does This Comment Regard? Health Department

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Please Include This letter is for the Tewksbury Board of Health.

Any Questions Dear Members of the Town Board of Health,

or Comments Thank you for providing the public the opportunity to share their thoughts and concerns regarding the fluoridation of Tewksbury's water supply.

I am writing to strongly advocate for maintaining water fluoridation in our town's water supply. This decision is crucial for the oral health and overall well-being of our community, and I urge you to consider the overwhelming evidence supporting its benefits.

Water fluoridation is a proven, safe, and effective public health measure that has been endorsed by nearly all major health organizations, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Dental Association (ADA), the World Health Organization (WHO), and over 90 world-renowned health institutions in total. It prevents at least 25% of tooth decay in both children and adults, resulting in

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fewer fillings, extractions, and missed days of work and school (1, 3). Moreover, it is a cost-effective intervention, saving communities an average of \$38 for every dollar spent on fluoridation through reduced dental treatment costs (2).

The recent experience of Calgary, Canada, serves as a stark example of the consequences of removing fluoride from drinking water. After Calgary stopped fluoridation in 2011, dental infections requiring IV antibiotics increased by 700%, and tooth decay worsened significantly among children (4). This led to a substantial increase in dental treatments under general anesthesia, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations. Calgary's decision to reintroduce fluoride in 2021 underscores the recognition of these adverse health impacts (5). Let's not make their same mistake.

Some may argue that fluoride toothpaste and oral rinses are sufficient alternatives to water fluoridation. However, the evidence clearly shows that these methods alone are not enough. Fluoridated water provides continuous protection throughout the day, complementing the topical benefits of toothpaste and rinses (1, 3). A study of over 13,000 U.S. children found that those with access to fluoridated water had significantly fewer decayed teeth compared to those without, even when fluoride toothpaste was widely used (3).

Concerns about dental fluorosis are often raised, but at the recommended fluoride levels, the risk is minimal. Fluorosis is primarily a cosmetic issue of the teeth, and severe forms are very rare when fluoride levels are kept within the optimal range (6). The benefits of fluoridation far outweigh this risk, especially considering the significant reduction in tooth decay and associated health costs.

Regarding concerns about fluoride's potential impact on IQ and neurodevelopment, it is essential to address these with well-supported and consistent high-quality evidence. Recent studies suggest that high levels of fluoride exposure—specifically at twice the recommended limit—may be associated with lower IQ in children (8, 9). However, these studies primarily involve fluoride levels far exceeding the recommended 0.7 mg/L in the U.S. and 1.5 mg/L by the World Health Organization (9, 14). Additionally, the authors of the meta analysis study admit that, "Fifty-two studies (of the studies included in the meta analysis) were rated high risk of bias". There is no evidence that fluoride at these recommended levels poses a risk to children's IQ or neurodevelopment (14). The rigor and quality of studies, as well as the context and overall consensus of evidence must be taken into account. I was also a little dismayed to see that you had cited a paper in your list of resource publications that has already been retracted.

It is also important to note that the dosage of pretty much everything we breathe and consume is critical and can affect one's health at different levels. "The dosage makes the poison" is an accurate and respected saying for a reason. Even water consumed above a certain volume can kill a person, and everything around us and including us is made of chemicals.

Next, I'd like to address the concept that individual freedom of choice should override

public health measures. While personal autonomy is crucial, it must be balanced against the collective right to safety and health. When an individual's actions or choices harm others, society has both the right and the responsibility to intervene for the greater good. Public health interventions must be necessary, effective, and proportional to the health threat, and the least restrictive alternative available. Water fluoridation benefits everyone in the community, regardless of age, socioeconomic status, or access to dental care. This is particularly important for vulnerable populations who may not have regular access to dental services or may not practice optimal oral hygiene. Community water fluoridation is the most cost-effective way to deliver fluoride to all members of a community, reducing dental treatment costs and adverse health impacts in the long run.

In conclusion, maintaining water fluoridation in our town is not only a sound public health decision but also a fiscally responsible one. I urge you to prioritize the health and well-being of our community by continuing this proven and effective public health measure. Don't make the same mistake that Calgary did. They learned from experience in recent years.

Thank you for your dedication to public health and your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

April Lowell McCreary  
Ph.D. in Molecular & Cellular Biology

Citations:

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