

EPA Scientists & Workers Call for an End to Water Fluoridation Because of Cancer Risk

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EPA UNIONS CALL FOR NATIONWIDE MORATORIUM ON FLUORIDATION, CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ON ADVERSE EFFECTS, YOUTH CANCER COVER UP

WASHINGTON, DC, August 30, 2005 --/WORLD-WIRE/-- Eleven EPA employee unions representing over 7000 environmental and public health professionals of the Civil Service have called for a moratorium on drinking water fluoridation programs across the country, and have asked EPA management to recognize fluoride as posing a serious risk of causing cancer in people. The unions acted following revelations of an apparent cover-up of evidence from Harvard School of Dental Medicine linking fluoridation with elevated risk of a fatal bone cancer in young boys.

The unions sent letters to key Congressional committees asking Congress to legislate a moratorium pending a review of all the science on the risks and benefits of fluoridation. The letters cited the weight of evidence supporting a classification of fluoride as a likely human carcinogen, which includes other epidemiology results similar to those in the Harvard study, animal studies, and biological reasons why fluoride can reasonably be expected to cause the bone cancer - osteosarcoma - seen in young boys and test animals.

The unions also pointed out recent work by Richard Maas of the Environmental Quality Institute, University of North Carolina that links increases in lead levels in drinking water systems to use of silicofluoride fluoridating agents with chloramines disinfectant.

The letter to EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson asked him to issue a public warning in the form of an advanced notice of proposed rulemaking setting the health-based drinking water standard for fluoride at zero, as it is for all known or probable human carcinogens, pending a recommendation from a National Academy of Sciences' National Research Council committee. That committee's work is not expected to be done before 2006.

The unions also asked Congress and EPA's enforcement office, or the Department of Justice, to look into reasons why the Harvard study director, Chester Douglass, failed to report the seven-fold increased risk seen in the work he oversaw, and instead wrote to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, the federal agency that funded the Harvard study, saying there was no link between fluoridation and osteosarcoma. Douglass sent the same negative report to the National Research Council committee studying possible changes in EPA's drinking water standards for fluoride.

The unions who signed the letters represent EPA employees from across the nation, including laboratory scientists in Ohio, Oklahoma and Michigan, regulatory support scientists and other workers at EPA headquarters in Washington, D.C. and science and regulatory workers in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, and San Francisco.

They are affiliated with the National Treasury Employees Union, the American Federation of Government Employees, Engineers and Scientists of California/International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, and the National Association of Government Employee/Service Employees International Union.