

Town of Pelahatchie water fluoridation update

By Katie White

During the July 5, 2022, meeting of the Mayor and Board of Alderman of the Town of Pelahatchie, the board voted whether or not to discontinue fluoridation in the Town's water supply due to cost and its necessity. This is the first step in the process.

The vote was tied with two yays by Alderman Eddie Jones and Alderwoman Margie Warren. Alderwoman Sandra Harvey and Alderwoman Diane Hill voted nay. Mayor Karl VanHorn broke the tie with a yay.

In April 2022, the Town of Pelahatchie proposed to stop adding fluoride to its drinking water.

The governing board proposed to discontinue community water fluoridation, stating the following reasons:

- Fluoride is already found in toothpaste, and most developed countries do not fluoridate their water.
- The chemical fluoride affects many tissues in the body besides the teeth, (i.e., thyroid, and endocrine disruption), and it is not a natural process.
- The use of fluoride causes severe health risks to Town employees.
- Fluoridation is an increased expense

to the citizens of the Town.

- Several water systems in the State are non-fluoridated.

Before the board voted, Melissa Larmer with the Bureau of Public Water Supply spoke about the importance of fluoridation as founded by several organizations.

Larmer reported that fluoridated water has been around for thousands of years. In countries where water fluoridation is already prevalent, for example, China and India, these countries opt to not add fluoridation. To do so would be harmful, as the levels of fluoridation would be too high.

Fluoride is not just added to the water in the U.S. – it is also regulated. Water fluoridation is recommended by the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, The American Association for Dental Research, The American Dental Association, The Center for Disease and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization, Mississippi Department of Health (MSDH) and the National Academy of Medicine – just to name a few.

According to the CDC (www.cdc.gov/), fluoride additives consist of three ingredients: 1) A dry salt additive, sodium fluoride; 2) A dry salt additive, sodium

um fluorosilicate; and 3) A water-based solution, hydrofluorosilicate. These additives must comply with all national safety standards. The additives are regulated with a system of standards,



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testing and certificates by the American Water Works Association (AWWA), the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) and The American National Standards Institute (ANSI). These organizations are nonprofit, nongovernment organizations. They regulate all fluoride that comes into this country. The fluoride must have the NSF seal.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has authority over safe community drinking water under the

Safe Drinking Water Act. The EPA regulates the level of fluoride in drinking water. Fluoridated community water systems adjust fluoride to approximately .7 mg per liter. Because in some rare locations where fluoride is naturally present in water at much higher levels, the EPA established a Maximum Contaminant Level for fluoride of 4.0 mg per liter.

Larmer expressed her concern for Mississippians who are at the poverty level who do not have access to basic necessities such as toothpaste and toothbrushes. Many citizens also do not have the means to visit a dentist. Larmer continued to report that where fluoride has been added in such cases, it has been credited with a national reduction in dental disease throughout a person's life span.

Having pulled water supply records for Pelahatchie, Larmer said, "our system does not have natural fluoridation. This area does a good job sampling and keeping the levels where they need to be."

For questions, contact Larmer or the MSDH Local Water System Office at 601-854-5224. For other concerns, visit Pelahatchie City Hall, located at 705 2nd St. Comment forms are available at the first window inside the building.

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