

Appeal-Democrat  
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## Yuba City to fluoridate its water supply

By Wyatt Haupt/Appeal-Democrat

After listening to 11 hours of public comment on the pros and cons of fluoridation, Yuba City's City Council decided to move forward with its plans to fluoridate its water supply.

The City Council voted 5-0 to adopt a resolution in support of fluoridation, thus ending a debate that started 35 years ago.

Mayor Lee Welch said he was thoroughly convinced that taking the step was the right thing to do for Yuba City.

"If I thought fluoridating the water would harm my children or anyone else's children I would not advocate putting fluoride into the water system," said Welch, shortly before the vote.

"It's the way to go," Welch said.

Councilwoman Sandra Hilliard said the issue of fluoridation was too important to ignore.

"I feel this is really important to our children," Hilliard said.

The city has set aside \$65,000 to fund the capital costs associated with installing a fluoride system. The annual cost to operate the system is estimated at about \$12,000.

Several Yuba City dentists, residents and various officials from the state appeared before the City Council in hopes of persuading it to vote in their favor. Not all of them walked away satisfied with the vote.

Lennard Livingston, a Yuba City resident, said by adopting the policy the City Council was doing the equivalent of putting "poison" in the water supply.

"I'm very happy with the water I have now. Then I found out we were going to poison the water," Livingston said.

"Give me the water without the poison," he said.

Fellow Yuba City resident, Pete Van Eckhardt, concurred with Livingston.

"I drink eight to 10 glasses of water a day and I don't want to drink water with that stuff in it," said Van Eckhardt, referring to fluoride.

"It's creating a toxic dump ... by putting it into the water," he said.

Proponents of the policy cited several reasons for putting fluoride into the city's water supply.

Dr. David Nelson of the California Department of Health Services in Sacramento said his department was delighted with the idea.

"It's effective and cost efficient. It's time for Yuba City to join San Francisco, Long Beach and Palo Alto in putting fluoride into its water supplies," Nelson said.

"It serves primarily children, but it can be effective for seniors as well. It's not just a children's issue," Nelson said.

Wendy Vota, a Yuba City pediatric dentist, said adding fluoride would be beneficial to children and their parents.

"A 3-year-old I recently treated had 19 of 22 teeth with severe dental decay. The cost to fix that will be \$3,600. By adding fluoride to the water we can avoid unnecessary expenses for parents and help the children," Vota said.

The City Council's vote to approve the use of fluoride ends a debate that started in 1963. It was then that the City Council first took up the issue when it asked its city engineer to look into the cost to fluoridate its water supply.