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EPA Headquarters Union: NRC Report Confirms EPA Union's 20-year-old Concerns

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U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY,
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS - NTEU CHAPTER 280

PRESS RELEASE
MARCH 23, 2006

Fluoride Report Confirms EPA Union's 20-year-old Concerns

The National Research Council's (NRC) report, "[Fluoride in Drinking Water: A Scientific Review of EPA's Standards](#)," was released yesterday. It vindicated [this union's](#) expressed concerns about fluoride toxicity dating back to 1986, when we defined [severe dental fluorosis](#) as an [adverse health effect](#) as the NRC just did. The NRC Committee also found that it was likely that there is an increase in bone fractures and increased risk of Stage II skeletal fluorosis among people drinking water at the 4 milligrams of fluoride per liter (mg/L) level. Again, our union has been saying this for years.

Furthermore, the Committee expressed concerns similar to those of the union over adverse effects on the brain and central nervous system, as well as endocrine disruption, including effects on thyroid function. The Committee report also cautions against assumptions - put forward by proponents of fluoridation - that there is no evidence that fluoride can cause cancer.

When [EPA](#) first issued its primary drinking water standards for fluoride in 1986, the union, which then was Local 2050 of the [National Federation of Federal Employees](#), told the public that the standards were not protective of public health. That is exactly what the NRC Committee of independent scientists said yesterday in its 450 page report. The Committee recommended that EPA lower its standards from 4 mg/L to an unspecified lower level.

EPA sets two primary [drinking water standards](#) for each regulated pollutant: a non-enforceable Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG), based solely on toxicity concerns to protect against any known or anticipated adverse effect on health; and an enforceable Maximum Contaminant Level, set by law as close to the MCLG as feasible. Both EPA standards for fluoride are currently 4 mg/L (or 4 parts per million per liter of water).

The report defines [severe dental fluorosis](#), which occurs in a significant fraction of people drinking water at 4 mg/L, as an adverse health effect, something the union has been saying for twenty years. In contrast, the American Dental Association and the Centers for Disease Control, while pushing to increase the public's exposure to fluoride through nation-wide fluoridation of drinking water supplies, have always referred to the condition as a "cosmetic" effect. The NRC now joins our union in putting the lie to this propaganda ploy by those whose devotion to an out-dated and dangerous policy overrode their obligations to protect public health.

The union got involved in this fight in 1986 as a matter of scientific integrity and to protect the right of EPA employees to live up to their Civil Service oath, which binds them to defend the Constitution. The union believes that in violating the Safe Drinking Water Act in 1986 by failing to set the MCLG at a level to protect against the adverse health effect of severe dental fluorosis, EPA management perpetrated an assault on the Constitution.

The NRC Committee also found that it was likely that there is an increase in bone fractures and increased risk of Stage II skeletal fluorosis among people drinking water at the 4 mg/L level. Again, our union has been saying this for years as its representatives have traveled around the United States helping citizens fight off efforts of the ADA and the CDC to add more fluoride to their water supplies and diets.

Furthermore, the Committee expressed concerns similar to those of the union over adverse effects on the brain and central nervous system, as well as endocrine disruption, including effects on thyroid function. The Committee report also cautions against assumptions - put forward by proponents of fluoridation - that there is no evidence that fluoride can cause cancer.

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For more information on the NRC report, [click here](#)

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