



Board of Health

John Filion

Office of the Chair

Date: July 12, 2011

To: Chair and Members
Public Works and Infrastructure Committee

Re: **CORE SERVICE REVIEW**
PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

As the Chair of the Board of Health, I am writing to you with respect to the recently released KPMG Core Service Review report to be considered at the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee on July 18, 2011. The report identifies the elimination of fluoridation of Toronto's water as a potential cost saving opportunity.

At its meeting on April 4, 2011, the Board of Health unanimously reaffirmed its position to continue the fluoridation of Toronto water. Toronto has a long history of water fluoridation, dating to 1963.

There was a thorough and lengthy discussion at the Board meeting. The meeting included an extensive presentation by Dr. Arlene King, Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario, who spoke about the evidence for water fluoridation and her strong recommendation that Toronto continue to fluoridate its water. Over a four and a half hour meeting, the Board heard presentations from leading academic and medical experts in dental health and members of the public. The Board also reviewed an extensive number of written submissions on this topic.

The cost to fluoridate Toronto's water is approximately \$1.9 million annually or about 75 cents per person. I am concerned that a recommendation be considered solely on such a low potential cost-saving and with such a potential impact on Torontonians' health, especially children of low income families.

Water fluoridation has proven to be the most cost-effective and equitable strategy for the prevention of dental caries. National and international scientific bodies continue to stress the importance of water fluoridation for oral health. Discontinuing the fluoridation of Toronto's water would reduce the oral health status of Torontonians.

In addition, were Toronto to discontinue water fluoridation, provincial program standards would require the City to ensure that alternate measures are introduced to maintain the current oral health status of its residents. Such measures (such as the provision of fluoride rinses in low-income schools) would be actually more costly and less effective than the continued fluoridation of Toronto's water.

I trust that the Committee will choose to continue the fluoridation of Toronto's drinking water.

Sincerely,

Councillor John Filion
Chair, Toronto Board of Health