



January 16, 2024

The Honorable Scott Korthuis
The Honorable Gary Bode
The Honorable Ron De Valois
The Honorable Gerald Kuiken
The Honorable Brent Lenssen
The Honorable Nick Laninga
The Honorable Kyle Strengholt
The Honorable Mark Wholrab
City of Lynden
300 4th Street
Lynden, WA 98264

Dear Mayor Korthuis, Councilmembers Bode, De Valois, Kuiken, Lenssen, Laninga, Strengholt, and Wholrab:

We urge you to maintain water fluoridation in Lynden. The City of Lynden has been an oral health leader in Washington state for nearly 64 years as one of the first communities to recognize water fluoridation is a safe, effective, efficient, and equitable approach to advancing good oral health for people of all ages and income levels. **Overwhelming evidence in peer reviewed research strongly supports both the safety and effectiveness of community water fluoridation at current levels recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).** It saves money for families and businesses while sparing people of all ages needless pain and hardship from cavities and dental infections.

Trusted family doctors, dentists, school nurses, hygienists, children's advocates, and senior care experts recommend drinking fluoridated water because it helps strengthen teeth against tooth decay. Cavities, tooth loss, and gum disease impact people of all ages. For kids, toothaches can affect school attendance, speech patterns, behavior, nutrition, and a child's ability to thrive. Among working adults, visible decay and missing teeth can influence career opportunities, overall health, self-esteem, and how others perceive you. And for older adults, tooth loss and oral disease can impact nutrition, the management of chronic conditions like diabetes and kidney disease, and social situations.

Equally important, community water fluoridation advances health equity and saves money for hardworking families because it benefits everyone regardless of age, income or insurance status. For most cities, there's an average \$38 in dental treatment cost savings for every \$1 a water system invests in water fluoridation. In fact, multiple studies show that people living in communities without access to fluoridated water require significantly more fillings, expensive root canals, and potentially traumatic extractions.

Since 1959, Lynden's water has provided protection that benefits seniors on fixed incomes, lower-income families and uninsured households. That means more Lynden children have a chance at growing up cavity-free and more older adults are retaining their teeth for a lifetime. And for individuals who are unable to visit a dentist annually, their teeth are more resistant to cavity-causing germs because of community water fluoridation's protective qualities.

We urge you to continue the important work started by the forward-thinking Lynden leaders who were among the state's early adopters of water fluoridation. They understood that preventing disease is preferable to treating illness. Generations of Lynden residents have enjoyed the benefits from community water fluoridation with fewer cavities and improved oral health. It would be unfortunate for future generations to be denied the same good oral health opportunities. If you have questions about water fluoridation, we are available to answer questions or direct you to a local trusted health professional. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary".

WSOHC Board of Trustees Chair

cc: John Williams, City Administrator
Jon Hutchings, Public Works Director