

HCS HB 1078 -- PUBLIC WATER FLUORIDATION

SPONSOR: Lichtenegger

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Tourism and Natural Resources by a vote of 23 to 0.

This bill requires any public water system or public water supply district intending to permanently cease fluoridation of its water supply to notify the Departments of Natural Resources and Health and Senior Services and its customers of its intentions at least 90 days before any vote on the matter. The system or district must notify its customers by radio, television, newspaper, or mail at least 90 days before any meeting at which the vote will occur. If the notice is sent by mail, the county or municipality in which the public water system or public water supply is located must pay for the cost of the notice.

Any public water system or public water supply that does not comply with the notification requirements must reinstate fluoridation until proper notification is provided.

The bill contains an emergency clause.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that many small communities are discontinuing fluoridation of the public drinking water due to budget concerns, but are not notifying customers of the change. Fluoride helps promote oral health, and the bill will make water customers aware of changes in the amount of fluoride provided by the water supply.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Lichtenegger; Missouri Coalition for Oral Health; Diann Bomkamp, Missouri Dental Hygienist Association; and Missouri Dental Association.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that the water supply does not normally take a position on fluoridation but takes direction from the community on whether to provide fluoridation or not. Many water supplies do not do mailings within the timeframe specified in the bill and therefore it would be expensive to do a separate mailing for the notification. Other media should be considered for notification.

Testifying on the bill were Missouri American Water Company; and Missouri Rural Water Association.