Mr Mayor and Council,

I apologize for not participating in the debate regarding fluoridation of water sooner. I was uncertain as to whether I would be available to make delegation status Monday. However, in reading the difficulty that making this decision was incurring, I wanted to take a few moments to add some information to the debate in hopes that it may clarify some issues.

I was contacted by Public Health officials regarding the matter, specifically to ascertain whether low-income groups would support their position.

I wish to tell you what I told staff. Despite circulation of the opportunity, no one came forward willing to speak to the issue, reflecting how low-income folks probably don’t see this issue as a priority. Views that I have heard are mixed, with probably a slightly higher number expressing the same kind of health concerns that you have heard and so therefore support the ending of the practice.

You should however know that there is fairly widespread opinion held that the supports for good oral health of people living with low-income, like a lot of such supports, are seen as extremely inadequate because of the financial limitations put on them. While fluoridation may or may not decrease some of the cavity and other problems, dental supports have not kept up with modern dental practice, and therefore, for example, far too many teeth are extracted rather than saved by modern techniques, simply because it is cheaper to do so. I am sure that low-income folks would hope that the city has supported the resolution from the City of Toronto regarding delay of the province’s new dental program. While still inadequate, it was at least a start.

Given the environmental evidence I have seen, and the real need for more aggressive supports to prevention of problems that will no doubt occur, whether water is fluoridated or not, I personally come down on the side of doing something different. While difficult to contemplate in these economic times, a passive approach does not meet the standard of care for each other that I would hope our systems of support would represent.

If ending fluoridation means a more hands approach, I support it and I think many low-income residents of Hamilton would too.

Sincerely

Peter Hutton