

Written Comments of

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President  
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to the

United States Senate

Committee on Environment and Public Works

For an Information-Gathering Process on Draft Legislation entitled,

America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2020 and

the Drinking Water Infrastructure Act of 2020: Stakeholder Comments

May 1, 2020



Founded in 1952, AGD is the only professional association that exclusively represents the needs and interests of general dentists. AGD provides its more than 39,000 members with the resources, support, and inspiration they need to deliver the best dental care and oral health education to the public. AGD's mission is to "advance general dentistry and oral health through quality continuing education and advocacy."

Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Carper, and members of the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee, thank you for providing the opportunity to submit written stakeholder comments to support the committee's "*Information-Gathering Process on Draft Legislation entitled, America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2020 and The Drinking Water Infrastructure Act of 2020: Stakeholder Comments.*"

On behalf of the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) and its 39,000 members, I would like to thank you for your efforts to develop and consider these discussion drafts. AGD appreciates the EPW Committee's commitment to enriching the lives of so many Americans via improvements to our nation's water resources infrastructure and drinking water infrastructure.

AGD is a professional association for general dentists from across the United States. Founded in 1952, the AGD has grown to become the country's second-largest dental association, and it is the only association that exclusively serves the needs and represents the interests of general dentists. The organization also works to promote the oral health of the public and to foster general dentists' continued proficiency through quality continuing education.

As dentists, we work to ensure that people in communities we serve are able to access safe, clean, and appropriately fluoridated drinking water. The provisions you have incorporated within *American's Water Infrastructure Act of 2020 (AWIA 2020)* and *The Drinking Water Infrastructure Act of 2020* will meaningfully advance this goal in every state, especially in small and rural communities. Small and rural water utilities are often in greatest need of funding assistance for operating, maintaining, and improving their drinking water systems.

The current COVID-19 crisis is placing a substantial financial impact on drinking water utilities<sup>1</sup>, many of which were already in dire need of funding to sustain infrastructure and facilities. Delay, prevention, or suspension of community water treatment plans as they relate to water fluoridation will likely result from impending budgetary constraints, intensified by the current crisis.

Community water fluoridation is one of the most practical, cost-effective, equitable, and safe measures communities can take to prevent tooth decay and improve their oral health. Water fluoridation is the best method of delivering fluoride to all members of the community, regardless of age, education, income level, or access to routine dental care.

The benefits of fluoride's effectiveness extend throughout life, resulting in fewer and less severe cavities. Each generation born since the implementation of water fluoridation 75 years ago has enjoyed better dental health than the generation that

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<sup>1</sup> American Water Works Association/Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies, Financial Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on U.S. Drinking Water Utilities, April 2020  
([https://www.awwa.org/Portals/0/AWWA/Communications/AWWA-AMWA-COVID-Report\\_2020-04.pdf](https://www.awwa.org/Portals/0/AWWA/Communications/AWWA-AMWA-COVID-Report_2020-04.pdf))



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preceded it<sup>2</sup>. In light of this, the AGD has long supported community water fluoridation programs and efforts to preserve and expand its practice, which has been one of public health's greatest success stories.

AGD strongly supports the committee's work to advance and refine these discussion drafts during these tumultuous and challenging times. We hope that Congress will pass water resources legislation, such as AWIA 2020 and the Drinking Water Infrastructure Act of 2020, in short order. Bolstering our nation's water resources is essential in ultimately providing Americans access to water that will enhance and protect their health.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these written comments. If you or your staff have any questions or need additional information, please contact Daniel J. Buksa, JD, Associate Executive Director of Public Affairs, by phone at (312) 440-4328 or via email at [daniel.buksa@agd.org](mailto:daniel.buksa@agd.org) to let us know how we may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Connie L. White, D.D.S., FAGD.' The signature is written in a cursive style.

Connie White, D.D.S., FAGD  
President  
Academy of General Dentistry

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<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 75 Years of Community Water Fluoridation, January 2020  
(<https://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/basics/anniversary.htm>)