February XX, 2013

To

The Board of Supervisors
Sonoma County

Members of the City Councils and Water Districts of Sonoma County served by

The Sonoma County Water Agency

Esteemed Members,

Dental disease is one of the great silent causes of preventable poor health and suffering in Sonoma County. While it strikes the poor more heavily, it affects most county residents, young and old.

The US Task Force on Preventive Services have recognized community water fluoridation and school based sealant programs as the two most strongly evidence-based approaches to improving oral health. Progress needs to be made in these areas as well as in providing access to needed dental care and education on oral hygiene and dietary practices. Access to fluoridation continues to increase in California and nationally. Nationally over 200 million Americans received fluoridated water in 2008 and the Healthy People target for the nation seeks to raise that to 79% by 2020.

Yet this most effective strategy for preventing dental decay remains unused in most of Sonoma County. For 65 years, community water fluoridation has been a safe and healthy way to effectively prevent tooth decay. Water fluoridation is recognized as [one of 10 great public health achievements](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00056796.htm) of the 20th century. Starting or continuing water fluoridation is effective in reducing dental caries by 30-50%.  Community water fluoridation is also required under California state law when resources are available. Fluoridation has been carefully evaluated by many expert bodies and found to be safe and effective at the levels used for community water fluoridation.   The American Dental Association and many other dental and medical organizations have long advocated for fluoridation as we witness its positive effects.

As a dentist [SPECIFY WHO YOU ARE – PHYSICIANS, DENTISTS, HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATIONS OR MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY] I/ we see the ravages of preventable and often untreated oral health disease in our county’s families daily. We strongly urge the members of the board to move expeditiously to achieve fluoridation of the Sonoma County Water Agency, the largest water supplier in the county, as well as to support the fluoridation of local systems covered by the state law in the future.

This measure will have a significant impact on reducing health disparities and improving the oral health not only of our children, but of Sonoma County residents of all ages. It will reduce preventable suffering and save money for families and health care systems.  We have delayed too long the protection of our children’s health, it is time for action.

Please feel free to use this document in any public documents or presentations in support of community water fluoridation.

Sincerely,