



Washington State Board of Health

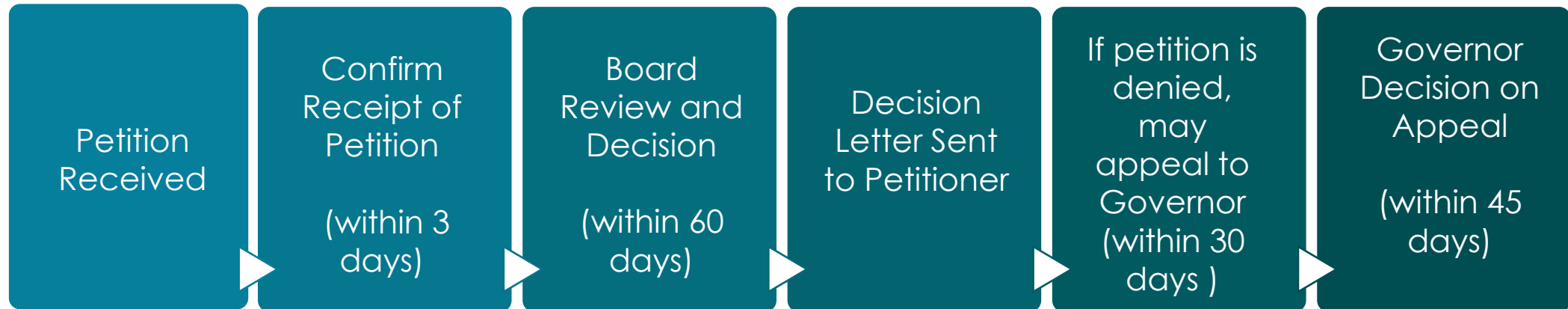
Rulemaking Petition, Group A Public Water Supplies, Drinking
Water Materials and Additives, WAC 246-290-220

March 13, 2024

Background

Under the Administrative Procedures Act (RCW 34.05.330), any person may petition a state agency to adopt, repeal, or amend any rule within its authority.

Overview of the Board's Petition Process:



Board Authority

- RCW 43.20.050 requires the Board to adopt rules for group A public water systems necessary to assure safe and reliable drinking water and to protect the public health.
- Chapter 246-290 WAC establishes the standards for these water systems.

- **WAC 246-290-220**

Requires testing and certification for conformance with NSF/ANSI Standards 60 and 61 for:

- Treatment chemicals added to public drinking water supplies; and
- Public water system components in substantial contact with potable water such as water pipes, tank coatings or liners, and treatment system media.



Petition Request

- On February 12, 2024, the Board received a petition for rulemaking to amend WAC 246-290-220.
- The request:
 - Amend WAC 246-290-220 to include:
 - (8) For the safety of the developing fetus, infant, and child, the board no longer endorses the addition of fluoride to public water and recommends reducing fluoride exposure for pregnant mothers, infants, and children under 6 years of age.
 - (a) Pregnant mothers and women planning to become pregnant (within 10 years) should limit fluoride ingestion by usually drinking water and liquids with less than 0.2 mg/L of fluoride, and do not swallow toothpaste;
 - (b) Caregivers of infants should use water as low in fluoride as practical, less than 0.2 mg/L, for making infant formula, juice, and drinking, and do not use fluoridated toothpaste.¹⁵
 - (c) Carefully supervise children when they are using fluoridated dental products, such as toothpaste, to assure they are not swallowing the toothpaste and are able to spit, rinse and spit, and again rinse and spit without first swallowing. Read and follow the toothpaste label.



Petitioner's Rationale

- The petitioner claims that the Board is in violation of RCW 43.20.050 and other laws, to assure safe drinking water.
- This petition is focused on a minimum label to protect the development of the most vulnerable, i.e. fetus, infant, and child.
- One of the goals of the petition is to start to “educate the public for their safety.”
- The intent of the petitioner's request for amending the rule, as stated in the petition is “to start protecting fetuses, infants, and children from the most significant risks and harm of fluoride exposure.”





Water Fluoridation

- The Department of Health supports community water fluoridation as a sound, population-based public health measure. Community water fluoridation is a proven public health prevention measure that benefits both children and adults, regardless of age, race, gender, or income. The department encourages communities to begin and maintain optimal fluoride levels for health benefits in drinking water systems.
- Organizations that recommend the Fluoridation of Public Water Systems and Recognize the Public Health Benefits:
 - Washington State Board of Health (WSBOH)
 - The American Water Works Association (AWWA)
 - World Health Organization (WHO),
 - American Medical Association (AMA),
 - Canadian Medical Association (CMA),
 - Centers for Disease Control (CDC),
 - American Dental Association (ADA),
 - Canadian Dental Association (CDA)



Child & Maternal Health

- Maintaining good oral health is essential to maintain a healthy pregnancy.⁹
- The American Academy of Pediatrics has published educational materials focused on optimal fluoride for children that says, "It is safe to use fluoridated water to mix the formula if your baby is younger than 6 months old, but there is a small risk of "fluorosis."
- The CDC also provides information on the safety of fluoridated water for use in infant formula.¹⁰
- There may be an increased chance of mild fluorosis when mixing infant formula with fluoridated water.¹⁰



Resources

1. [Recommended Strategies to Improve the Oral Health of Washington Residents | SBOH](#)
2. [2023DOHFluorideSupportStatement.pdf \(wa.gov\)](#)
3. [Oral Health Equity Assessment \(wa.gov\)](#)
4. [Fluoride in Water | What You Need To Know About Fluoride \(ilikemyteeth.org\)](#)
5. [Fluoridation \(ca.gov\)](#)
6. [Task Force Recommends Fluoride to Prevent Dental Caries | AAFP](#)
7. [Promoting Oral Health through Water Fluoridation | FDI \(fdiworlddental.org\):](#)
8. [Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies | American Water Works Association \(awwa.org\)](#)
9. [AAP continues to recommend fluoride following new study on maternal intake and child IQ | AAP News | American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
10. [Infant Formula | FAQs | Community Water Fluoridation | Division of Oral Health | CDC](#)

