

# Aldermen almost evenly divided on fluoride question: Herald survey

## Council to take up four options on divisive issue

BY JASON MARKUSOFF, CALGARY HERALD JANUARY 31, 2011



Alderman Druh Farrell listens to comments during city council's debate on the issue of fluoride in city water in Calgary Wednesday, January 26, 2011.

**Photograph by:** Stuart Gradon, Calgary Herald

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Fluoridation: scrap it, keep it, study it or put it to plebiscite?

Those four options will come before city council next Monday after its utilities and environment committee recommended this past week an end to 20 years of adding fluoride to Calgary's water supply.

A survey of aldermen suggests a nearly even split between those who want to vote "no" immediately and be done with it and others who want the issue studied by a University of Calgary panel of public-health experts.

Here's how they stand:

Gian-Carlo Carra -- Open to panel idea, if members are unbiased and if the ethics and environmental impacts are thoroughly studied, too. "I don't think it's just a medical issue."

Andre Chabot -- Scrap. "To impose medication on everyone: I don't think it's something anyone should have a right to do."

Diane Colley-Urquhart -- Scrap. "I am committed to us removing it from the water." (A nurse, her position has shifted since voting to keep fluoridation in 2009).

Peter Demong -- Undecided. Looks forward to council debate. "Whether it goes to a medical study or whether it doesn't, that's up to council to decide."

Druh Farrell -- Scrap. Wants the money spent on fluoride treatments for low-income children. Doesn't see worth in medical panel: "That doesn't address the ethical question of who simply wants the choice."

Ray Jones -- Panel. "We ought to do our due diligence. I don't think we should just go in and make an arbitrary decision."

Shane Keating -- Scrap. Spend money on individual fluoride-treatment programs. "I think there's a far better option we have. . . . I don't think a panel is going to do any more that we heard (at the public hearing)."

John Mar -- Scrap. Fluoridation is "medication without consent. A panel would merely delay things. "What more could we learn?"

Brian Pincott -- Scrap. "Together with what we have heard, and the e-mails we have gotten from residents, I think we can get rid of it."

Jim Stevenson -- Scrap. Said after public hearing that nothing has swayed him in 30 years. "We have all the research we need."

Dale Hodges -- No comment. "There's no winning on this issue."

Gord Lowe -- Panel. "I'm always curious when people who have to make rulings deny access to informed fact. Whether you accept it at the end of the day or not is another question."

Gael MacLeod -- Panel, as long it's credible and unbiased. "It's not clear to me what is substantive research and what research is less rigorous. And that's what a panel of experts will be able to help us with."

Mayor Naheed Nenshi -- Panel. "I think the university has made us a wonderful offer we shouldn't pass up. And then I think council needs to have a serious discussion about a plebiscite."

Richard Pootmans -- Panel. "It makes a lot of sense. Then we have to seriously consider a plebiscite. I don't think we have a clear mandate from the public to go either way on it."

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