

March 5, 2025

Honorable Lee Zeldin
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Zeldin:

As the leading authority on oral health in the United States, the American Dental Association (ADA), representing over 159,000 dentists across the country, writes to highlight several key policy issues that we believe should be prioritized during the Trump Administration, specifically by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Oral health is a critical component of overall health and addressing the challenges in this area will lead to significant improvements in the well-being of millions of Americans as well as supporting the \$478 billion annual economic impact of the nation's economy.

For more than 160 years, the ADA has been the leading voice in advancing dentistry and promoting good oral health. As the largest and oldest dental organization globally, the ADA sets standards for clinical excellence, education, and advocacy. Our mission is to help dentists succeed while advancing public health, guided by core values of integrity, excellence, and evidence-based care. The ADA was also recently named the nation's leading professional association in self-regulating according to a recent survey commissioned by APCO Worldwide.

The ADA Forsyth Institute (AFI), established in 1910, is a world leader in oral and craniofacial research, driving innovation and scientific discovery that shapes the future of dental care and public health. From developing new treatments to pioneering research on the links between oral and systemic health, AFI remains at the forefront of dental research, shaping the future of patient care and improving oral health worldwide. As the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission investigates the root causes of chronic illness, the ADA looks forward to contributing evidence-based research on the intersection of oral health and chronic disease. Oral health can be essential to preventing and managing chronic conditions and is at the heart of the administration's health priorities.

The ADA's Health Policy Institute (HPI) complements this work as a leading authority on oral health research and policy analysis. With a mission to inform decision-makers through credible data and insights, HPI tracks critical trends in oral health, dental care access, and the economics of the dental profession. By providing reliable, evidence-based information to policymakers, researchers, and the public, HPI ensures that oral health is recognized as a key element of overall health policy, ultimately improving health outcomes for millions of Americans. The ADA shares the administration's commitment to research transparency and scientific integrity and ADA's HPI and AFI provide independent, peer-reviewed research to inform health policy decisions. We support efforts to expand open-access health data and ensure rigorous, unbiased research in oral health.

Fluoridation lawsuit

We strongly urge EPA to continue its appeal of the United States District Court for the Northern District of California's ruling in *Food & Water Watch v. EPA*, Case No. 17-CV-02162-EMC. This decision has significant implications for the EPA's regulatory authority under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), setting a concerning precedent that could force the agency to regulate substances without proper risk assessment.

Rather than narrowly reviewing whether the EPA fully considered a citizen petition to prohibit fluoridation chemicals in U.S. water supplies, the court ordered the agency to take regulatory action. It places a federal judge's interpretation of science above the scientific expertise of federal regulators and reputable scientific organizations.

This ruling places judicial interpretation above the EPA's scientific expertise, creating unnecessary regulatory exposure. Appealing this case is essential to avoid unnecessary regulation whenever a citizen petition is filed, based on scientifically unsubstantiated claims.

Dental Office Pretreatment Standard¹

We urge EPA to proceed cautiously if considering reforms to its Dental Office Wastewater Pretreatment Standard. Regulatory changes imposed suddenly could lead to financial and operational disruptions of dental practices.

EPA's pretreatment standard calls for dental offices to use amalgam separators to reduce discharges of dental amalgam into public wastewater systems. The ADA supported this standard—which was adopted during President Trump's first term—as a balanced, effective way to help wastewater treatment facilities capture dental amalgam.

We ask the EPA to carefully assess any regulatory modifications to avoid unnecessary disruptions to compliance practices.

Minamata Convention on Mercury

We urge EPA to maintain the U.S. position on dental amalgam in the Minamata Convention on Mercury, a global environmental agreement that aims to limit mercury emissions. The U.S. joined as a party to the Convention in 2013.

The U.S. has long supported a phasedown of dental amalgam by increasing prevention efforts, researching viable alternatives, using other restorative materials and following best practices for handling amalgam waste properly. This contrasts with the positions of a small group of countries seeking to phase *out* the use of dental amalgam.

The U.S. approach allows dentists to make the best clinical decisions for patients while ensuring responsible environmental stewardship. It is also consistent with the EPA's pretreatment standard for dental office wastewater.

As you begin your tenure as EPA Administrator, the ADA is eager to serve as a trusted partner and resource for your team. To that end, we would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and your leadership team to discuss how we can work together on these priorities. We welcome the chance to work closely with your team to ensure that oral health remains a central part of the nation's healthcare agenda. Please feel free to reach out to our

¹ 40 CFR Part 441.

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Senior Vice President of Government and Public Affairs, James Schulz, at schulzj@ada.org
or 202-789-5167 to discuss these issues further and arrange a meeting.

Sincerely,

/s/

Brett Kessler, D.D.S.
President

BHK:EAS:rjb

/s/

Elizabeth Shapiro, D.D.S., J.D., C.A.E.
Interim Executive Director