



Clerk of the Board
Date and Time Recorder Stamp

**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

VETO AND VETO MESSAGE

To: Honorable Chairman Anthony Rodriguez and
Members of the Board of County Commissioners
Miami-Dade County, Florida

From: Daniella Levine Cava, Mayor
Miami-Dade County, Florida

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniella Levine Cava".

Pursuant to the authority vested in me under the provisions of Section 2.02(D) of the Miami-Dade County Home Rule Charter, I hereby veto Resolution No. R-370-25, which was adopted as amended at the April 1, 2025, Board of County Commissioners meeting:

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE MIAMI-DADE WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT TO DISCONTINUE ADDING FLUORIDE TO THE COUNTY'S WATER SUPPLY AS EXPEDITIOUSLY AS POSSIBLE BUT NOT LATER THAN 30 DAYS; AND DIRECTING THE COUNTY MAYOR OR COUNTY MAYOR'S DESIGNEE TO ADVISE CUSTOMERS OF THE MIAMI-DADE WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT THAT FLUORIDE IS BEING REMOVED FROM THE COUNTY'S DRINKING WATER THROUGH: (1) INCLUSION OF A MESSAGE ON WATER BILLS FOR TWO BILLING CYCLES, (2) PLACEMENT OF A MESSAGE ON THE MIAMI-DADE WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE, AND (3) IF CONTRACTUALLY REQUIRED, SENDING NOTICE TO THE COUNTY'S WHOLESALE CUSTOMERS

VETO MESSAGE

On April 1, 2025, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) adopted as amended, Resolution No. R-370-25 ordering the discontinuation of adding fluoride to the County's water supply as expeditiously as possible, but no later than 30 days.

Since then, my office has heard from hundreds of residents on both sides of the issue, and I have engaged in extensive conversation with medical experts, including dentists, doctors, and public health leaders, as well as parents.

Miami-Dade County has added fluoride to our water since 1958, following all local, state, and federal standards. Major public health and medical organizations of expert health professionals, including the American Dental Association and American Academy of Pediatrics, recognize fluoridating water at low levels as a safe and effective way to

protect dental health. The wellbeing of our residents is my top priority as mayor, and the decision to continue fluoridating our water is not one I take lightly. Any change to this longstanding practice must be rooted in scientific consensus and an understanding of the short- and long-term consequences for our community.

In listening closely to our residents and to the experts over the past several days, it has become clear to me that I must veto Resolution No. R-370-25 for the reasons outlined below in order to protect the health and wellbeing of our community.

First and foremost, the decision to remove fluoride from Miami-Dade's water ignores the guidance of dentists and medical experts, who are overwhelmingly trusted by our residents on this issue. Earlier this week, I hosted a roundtable discussion with dentists and medical experts who affirmed fluoridation's significant positive impact on preventing tooth decay in both children and adults, as well as the safety of adding fluoride to our water at the current level. We know that recent studies about the potential health impacts of high fluoride levels have created concern in our community, especially for parents. However, Miami-Dade County's water supply currently has a fluoride level of 0.7 milligrams per liter, the amount recommended by major health organizations including the American Dental Association. No study has found this level harmful. In fact, studies that have highlighted potential harmful effects of fluoride tested concentrations many times higher than what is added to our water.

Medical experts also stress that there are serious public health risks of ending fluoridation that go beyond dental care. Removing fluoride will have long-term consequences for children's health, especially for our most vulnerable children who lack access to regular dental and medical care. Oral health is closely linked to overall physical health, and poor oral health raises the risk of other ailments from cardiovascular disease to diabetes. We know from other communities that have ended fluoridation that children from lower-income households are more likely to suffer dental emergencies – meaning more children will miss days of school and have trouble concentrating due to dental pain, parents must take time off work, and families who are already struggling will face additional financial strain.

While it may be a relatively simple act to discontinue fluoridation as directed in this resolution, the long-term effects of doing so are anything but simple. Ending fluoridation is a critical decision with long-lasting consequences for our community, and it is essential that we fully and deliberately consider the risks.

Other counties and cities have made the decision to remove fluoride from their water only to add it back in years later, at great expense to their communities' physical and in some cases financial health. In nearby Pinellas County, fluoride was reinstated just two years after its removal in 2011, following public outcry. In Buffalo, New York, city officials recently added fluoride back to their water supply following a class action lawsuit from residents that could cost the city \$160 million. In Calgary, the largest city in the Canadian province of Alberta, officials voted to stop fluoridating water in 2011. A decade later, a study showed that cavities among children had increased dramatically, and voters elected to bring the fluoride back.

Resolution No. R-370-25 was passed following a hasty process that did not include a committee hearing – where a full presentation on both sides of the issue could have been made – and was only discussed on the dais the day the Commission voted to pass it. It's vital that the public have an ample opportunity to understand and provide input on a decision that will affect the lives of every resident in Miami-Dade County now and in the future. I urge the Board to reconsider this decision in the coming days and weeks, to ensure we are making the best possible decision for our community.

CLOSING

As not only Mayor but a mother and grandmother, I care deeply about protecting the health, safety, and wellbeing of our community. Water fluoridation is upheld by dentists and medical experts as a safe, effective, and efficient way to maintain dental health in our county – and halting it could have long-term and wide-reaching health consequences, especially for our most vulnerable families. I welcome continued and balanced dialogue as we move forward to make the best decision on behalf of our county's nearly three million residents. I urge the Board to sustain this veto, so that we may continue building a safe and healthy Miami-Dade.