

Fluoride opponents bite back

Watsonville water addition opposed

By **LIZ KELLAR**

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WATSONVILLE — Fluoride foes say they will let the clock run out on the deadline to challenge the City Council's decision to explore the addition of fluoride to city water.

That doesn't mean they have given up the fight, though.

Organizers with San Diego-based Citizens for Safe Drinking Water met with some local residents earlier this week to discuss ways to halt the city's efforts.

Fluoride is sometimes added to drinking water to prevent tooth decay. Opponents say fluoride use is a matter of choice and not something a city should foist upon residents.

The anti-fluoride group is considering asking a council member to introduce a resolution that would, in effect, kill fluoridation without banning it outright. The resolution would ban the city from introducing substances into city water that have not been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Fluoride is not approved by the FDA.

Jeff Green, director of the national group, said if such a resolution is rejected by the council, the group could call for a special election.

"There are individuals in Watsonville disheartened by the council's position," Green

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said. "They aren't going to stand still for what's happening."

Resident Dan Hernandez attended the meeting.

"We don't want any chemicals in our water, period," he said. "We're more advocates of clean water."

Hernandez accused the council of ignoring residents, and said he is working to mobilize city residents.

He said the group discussed approaching the two council members who voted against fluoridation July 17: Judy Doering-Nielsen and Betty Bobeda.

Doering-Nielsen said Friday she would be open to putting the ordinance on the agenda.

"I'm very supportive of their efforts, and I would be happy to work with them in any way I could," she said. "I

Saturday, August

believe it's a personal choice and should be put to a vote."

The group would need to collect signatures from 15 percent of the city's 12,645 registered voters — 1,897 signatures — to call a special election on the issue. The requirement drops to 10 percent to place an initiative on the regular ballot.

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