

Ballot to be fluoridated

Fluoridation
More than 2,000 signatures collected to put water fluoridation in Watsonville on the November ballot

REGISTER-PAJARONIAN STAFF REPORT

The campaign for voter approval on whether or not Watsonville water should be fluoridated is off and running. Today members of the group Citizens for Safe Drinking Water handed in 2,239 signatures to get the Safe Drinking Water Initiative on the November ballot.

"People want to see this on the ballot, they were very willing to sign," said Karelle Reader, member of Citizens for Safe Drinking Water.

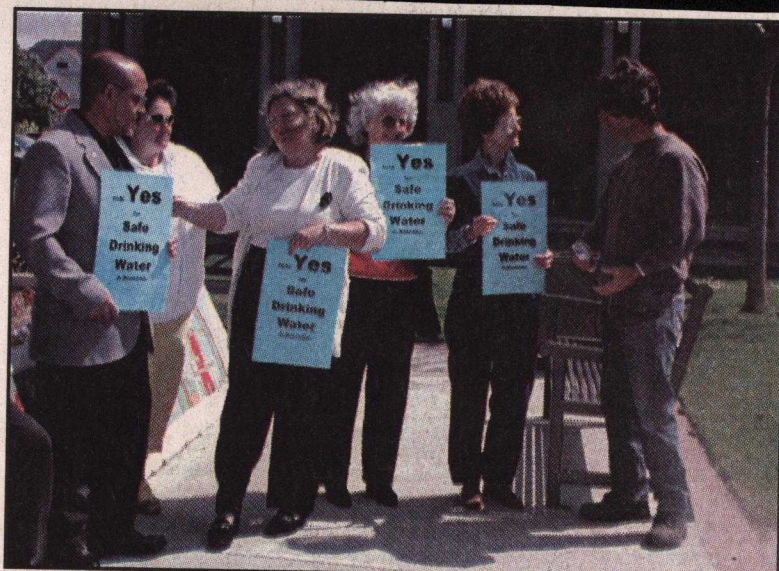
Members of the group said they have no budget yet to fund their campaign, but they say they'll be out in front of supermarkets and going door-to-door to spread the word about harmful affects of fluoridation plan. 52102
fluoridation plan.

The initiative drive comes just one week after the Watsonville City Council voted in favor of final plans and specifications for a water fluoridation system. Mayor Betty Bobeda and City Council member Judy Doering-Nielsen cast the only two no votes against the

The Watsonville city attorney will craft the exact wording for the initiative on the ballot. But according to a news release by the Citizens for Safe Drinking Water, the language will be straightforward and read something like this:

"The Watsonville Safe Drink Water Initiative prohibits the addition of any substance to the public water supply for the purpose of treating people, rather than the water that has not been specific-

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C.J.Cannino/Register-Pajaronian

Dan Hernandez (from left), Marlene Boracca, Karelle Reader, Jane Soares, Dorothy Leach and Nick Bulaich demonstrate against fluoridating city water in front of City Hall Monday.

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ly approved by the U.S. FDA for safety and effectiveness in accordance with health claims made, at all levels of consumption."

"It's real simple. It (the initiative) pertains to anything. When you're making a health claim, it must have FDA approval," said Maureen Jones from Citizens for Safe Water.

Proponents of the initiative claim the fluoridation of city water is aimed to save the dental health of low-income families, but opponents say most of those residents drink bottled water anyway and there's no proven research that indicates ingesting fluoride can prevent tooth decay.

"Toothpaste has a warning label on it not to swallow because of the fluoride, why should we drink it?" said Nick Bulaich, who favors the Safe Drinking Water initiative.

According to Watsonville City Clerk Lorraine Washington, the process of validating all the signatures on the ballot is the next step and she estimates the initiative will go before the City Council for approval around July 23.

For more information on the Safe Drinking Water initiative contact www.wcfsdw.org or 768-0748.