

Water.

It's one thing for a child wetting a toothbrush, another for a man dying of thirst in a desert, another for a Kanopolis fisherman, another for a downstream irrigator in 100-plus-degree heat. But no matter where, life-sustaining, clean water is essential.

Because it is essential, our water is a public trust. This makes it equally essential that government in all its forms, must look after everyone's best interests in water use.

Is that good or bad? Depends on the wisdom displayed by our government, and directly or indirectly, by us. Take former Schilling AFB as an example.

On the bad side, the US Air Force once cleaned off planes with TCE, to maintain the planes' vigilant defense of our freedom. In the process, that chemical restricted our freedom, that is, free use of underground water. Now, \$9.4 million is TCE's clean-up cost, some 50 years later.

On the good side, a wise, considered partnership of local government entities (the City, the Airport Authority, KSU, and USD 305) struck a bargain with the Feds, resulting in Federal payment of \$8.4 million. Good! As reporter Tim Unruh notes, Salina's groundwater is more essential than in "lake-laden Michigan."

We are fortunate. Not so the folks in West Virginia. In Charleston, its capital, they had no drinking water for days to months and damaging pollution for years to come. All courtesy of a chemical spill from a company called Freedom Industries. It affected 300,000 people. One of every 5 affected folks (or about 60,000) had serious health problems as a result of drinking it. Business costs alone were pegged at \$61 million. And what was the fine for 'Freedom Industries?'

Eleven thousand dollars. That would be about an 18-cent fine per sickened individual. And about two ONE HUNDREDTHS of ONE PERCENT of the damage done to business in West Virginia. That's highway robbery—of our health. Indeed, freedom has its cost.

That is real poison. But fluoride? It's hard to understand the current concern about Salina's water. Now some advocate an end to adding fluoride, a process Salina began nearly 50 years ago, when TCE became a threat.

This should not be a partisan issue. Good and valued friends of mine advocate fluoride's removal. I am with them when it comes to not counting on governmental intentions. In a state flooded by foolish, harmful public policy bought and paid for by big money interests, I am with them 100% when it comes to questioning such policies. I am with citizens who think for themselves and work toward our best outcomes—including pure food and water.

But.

I find fluoride opponents seriously misguided on the science--and seriously jeopardizing their own children and grandchildren on this vital public health issue.

The Bad China Fluoride argument is easily answered by this fact: Fluoride quality is regularly checked by the National Sanitation Foundation. I would also note that most folks don't seem worried, when it comes to buying any number of China-produced goods at Wal-mart.

Why does Salina flouridate? A recent study of communities who dropped fluoridation found this startling statistic: Within 5 years, the amount of child tooth decay had DOUBLED. Better teeth last a lifetime, say 70-plus years. The damage done by non-fluoridation lasts as long. Pity the poor Wichitan. By that measure, Salina is a far better place to live. So far.

We should give Salina's water department the thanks it deserves. Fluoride—and the entire water supply--is carefully monitored. They do 80,000 analyses per year, or an average 219 examinations per day. Fluoride levels are checked twice per day, and KDHE regularly double-checks the city.

Once based on a .7 to 1.2 mg/Liter basis (a standard found safe by 300 peer-reviewed studies), fluoride now no longer exceeds .7 mg/L, upon recommendation of the EPA and Health and Human Services. How do we wrap our minds around .5-.7 mg/L?

Cut a pencil eraser into one thousand pieces. (I dare you). Then cut half of one of those microscopic pieces in a liter bottle. That's your dose. An eyelash on an elephant. This miniscule amount goes into water processed at a rate of 4,200 gallons per minute.

We ultimately decide what our government does, by daily individual action, and by electing representatives and voting on ballot initiatives like those this November. There are a number of possibilities to remove harmful public representatives and reform harmful public policy in this election. The Fluoride vote is NOT one of them.

Vote NO to Keep Fluoride.

David Hanson, Oct. 2014