



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH &amp; SOCIAL SECURITY

Alexander Fleming House, Elephant &amp; Castle, London SE1 6BY

Telephone 01-407 5522

*From the Secretary of State for Social Services*

The Rt Hon The Viscount Whitelaw CH MC  
 Lord President of the Council  
 Privy Council Office  
 Whitehall  
 LONDON  
 SW1A 2AT

S November 1984

*Dear Willie.*  
*will request if required*

*W  
 ofm.*

## THE QUEEN'S SPEECH: THE WATER FLUORIDATION BILL

I am writing, following the correspondence initiated by my letter of 23 October, to let you and colleagues know how I shall be handling questions arising from the non-inclusion of this Bill in the Queen's Speech.

As I said in my letter, I expect to report further on the implications of recent research on the effects of fluoride within the next few weeks. I think it most unlikely that the fuller evaluation which is now in hand will lead me to any other conclusion than that we should maintain the existing policy on the fluoridation of the public water supply. That is the purpose of my Bill. The reason for the delay is to ensure that our public position on the safety aspects, at the time of the introduction of the Bill, could be based on a more thorough evaluation of all the evidence than is immediately available.

For the time being I intend to deal with any queries about the omission of the Bill from the Queen's Speech by saying that

- not every Bill is specifically mentioned in the speech. This is a short one designed to clarify statutory powers, not to introduce a new policy. We expect to introduce it this session as planned.

I shall take the line that nothing in the research currently available gives me cause to want to change the policy - which the Bill is intended to reinforce. Equally, I am sure that we should urge water authorities who are facing legal challenge - in particular the Severn and Trent Authority where there is a case being actively pursued - to continue their preparations to defend the present position pending the Bill's introduction. I see no difficulty in justifying this

stance. If the evidence were ultimately to lead us to believe that we should not sustain the existing policy, we would of course have to say so publicly but that is not my expectation, nor should we give the impression that we expect it.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, members of L Committee, the Minister for Housing and Construction, First Parliamentary Counsel and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*John all.* *Norman Fowler*

NORMAN FOWLER

NOV 10 1954  
LONDON