



2025-26 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Todd V. Ester, D.D.S., M.A.  
Chair of the Board

Cherae M. Farmer-Dixon, D.D.S., M.S.P.H.  
Chair-elect of the Board

Susan H. Kass, M.Ed., Ed.D., RDH  
Immediate Past Chair of the Board

Mert N. Aksu, D.D.S., J.D.,  
M.H.S.A., Cert DPH  
Board Director for Deans

Russ Bergman, D.M.D.  
Board Director for  
Advanced Education Programs

Dharini van der Hoeven, M.Sc., Ph.D.  
Board Director for Sections

Marion Manski, M.S., RDH  
Board Director for Allied  
Dental Program Directors

Justin Bower, M.B.A.  
Board Director for the Corporate Council

Erin Gross, D.D.S., M.S., Ph.D.  
Board Director for Faculties

Justin James Donato  
Board Director for Students,  
Residents and Fellows

Karen P. West, D.M.D., M.P.H.  
President and CEO

The mission of ADEA is to develop an inclusive, future-ready oral health workforce prepared to improve the health of all people and communities through leadership, education and collaboration.

655 K Street, NW, Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20001  
Phone: 202.289.7201  
Fax: 202.289.7204  
adea.org

February 27, 2026

Administrator Lee Zeldin  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Zeldin,

On behalf of the American Dental Education Association (ADEA), I am writing to emphasize the critical importance of ensuring that the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) assessment of fluoride's health effects is grounded in gold-standard scientific review, consistent with Executive Order 14303, "Restoring Gold Standard Science." As *The Voice of Dental Education*, ADEA strongly supports EPA's commitment to evidence-based policymaking, and in this case, that commitment must include an independent, authoritative peer review of the agency's assessment plan and systematic review.

To meet the highest scientific and public health standards, ADEA urges the EPA to commission the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) to conduct this peer review prior to finalization. NASEM is universally recognized as the premier, gold-standard institution for objective and methodologically rigorous scientific evaluation. Its involvement would ensure that EPA's process reflects the most credible and unbiased analysis available.

To achieve a truly gold-standard review, EPA must also ensure that the body of evidence under consideration reflects only the highest quality, peer-reviewed research, particularly regarding neurocognition and fluoride exposure. This includes excluding studies known to carry a high risk of bias, lacking methodological rigor or failing to undergo credible peer review. Conversely, EPA should incorporate the substantial body of well-conducted, recent

Administrator Lee Zeldin

February 27, 2026

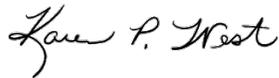
Page 2

research that more accurately represents fluoride exposure levels typical of U.S. communities.

Given the importance of ensuring a scientifically robust foundation for future regulatory decisions, ADEA urges the EPA to place gold-standard review at the center of its process to safeguard both the integrity of the assessment and the public trust it deserves. Specifically, we strongly encourage EPA to affirm its commitment to the highest scientific standards by engaging NASEM to conduct this essential peer review.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen P. West".

Karen P. West, D.M.D., M.P.H.

President and CEO

American Dental Education Association