

Dear Mayor and Council:

As you consider measures to promote the right to water, decrease waste and protect the environment, we encourage you to consider supporting public water by actively encouraging the consumption of tap water over bottled water.

In the past year Canadians have made a commitment to public water services. Across the country municipalities, schools and universities, faith-based organizations, restaurants and unions have stood up for Canada's public water services by phasing out the provision and sale of bottled water.

Just recently the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) distributed a communiqué to all its members endorsing municipal initiatives to promote public water and phase out the provision and sale of bottled water in municipal facilities.

In Ontario alone 13 municipalities have passed legislation to phase out the provision and sale of bottled water on city/town property and promote public municipal water, with many more currently exploring options for how to "turn on the tap" and phase out the bottle.

The fact is that in Ontario municipal water systems are among the safest and strongest in the world. Meanwhile bottled water costs consumers thousands of times more and is far less regulated than tap water. The production of bottled water also consumes vast amounts of energy and releases harmful toxics into the environment.

Of the many different services that municipalities provide, it is often said that no service is as critical to the health of citizens as the supply of clean water. Phasing out the provision and sale of bottled water on municipal property and committing to promoting clean and accessible public water will demonstrate a commitment to public water.

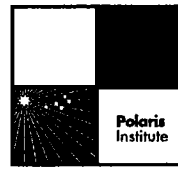
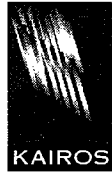
The enclosed documents briefly outline how municipalities can take action on public water services and bottled water.

As a network of organizations from across Ontario we would be pleased to discuss these issues and options in more detail and look forward to hearing from you soon.

With Regards,

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On behalf of: Polaris Institute, The Council of Canadians, CUPE Ontario, OPSEU, KAIROS, Development and Peace, Sierra Youth Coalition, Development and Peace, Canadian Federation of Students, Public Water Initiative at U of T



Take the Plunge: Bottled Water Municipal Examples

Across Canada municipalities have taken action on bottled water. Here are a just a few examples of municipal actions that limit or end the use of bottled water and promote the consumption of tap water.

- *Region of Waterloo, Ontario:* Regional Municipality passed a resolution restricting the provision and sale of bottled water on regional property, except in locations where potable tap water is not available.
- *London, Ontario:* City Council passed a bottled water motion that prohibited the sale and distribution of bottled water on city owned and operated property and provided alternatives for the provision of accessible tap water.
- *St. John's, Newfoundland:* City Council banned the use of city money for the purpose of providing bottled water on city property, including during city-hosted events.
- *Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island:* City Council made the decision to stop purchasing bottled water.
- *Altona, Manitoba:* Municipality phased out the provision of water coolers and bottled water in its offices
- *Region of Metro Vancouver, British Columbia:* Council voted to launch a public campaign to support tap water and to encourage local municipalities to phase out the availability of bottled water in civic centres and install more water fountains.

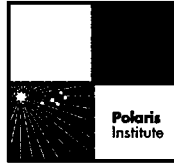
Canadian Statistics:

- 24 Municipalities from six provinces in Canada have implemented restrictions on bottled water
- 16 Municipalities in Ontario have implemented restrictions on bottled water
- 15 Municipalities in Ontario are currently exploring restrictions on bottled water

CASE STUDY: CITY OF TORONTO

In December 2008 the City of Toronto passed a comprehensive bottled water motion that banned the sale or distribution of bottled water and provided alternatives for the provision of accessible tap water. Here are the details of the City of Toronto's approach to bottled water:

- Ban the sale or distribution of bottled water at Civic Centres immediately.
- Direct staff from all City Departments to work together to develop and implement a program that bans the sale and distribution of bottled water at all remaining City facilities, including in vending machines.
- Direct staff from all City Departments to improve accessibility to tap water at all City facilities.
- Launch a public awareness campaign that promotes the consumption of tap water
- Ensure that portable outdoor water trucks/trailers are available for outdoor city hosted and sponsored events.



Take the Plunge: Bottled Water Action Options for Ontario Municipalities

Phase out the sale and distribution of bottled water in City/Town facilities

- Prohibit the use of municipal government funds to purchase or distribute bottled water. Why not start with City/Town Hall (Council meetings, bottled water available in department offices) and develop a strategy to phase out bottled water in city facilities and sponsored events
- Begin dialogue with vendors in City/Town owned and leased space towards ending the sale of bottled water
- Remove bottled water sold in vending machines in City/Town owned and leased space (develop a provision regarding bottled water for upcoming agreement renewals)

Providing and promoting alternatives to bottled water

- Establish a municipal policy that mandates a cross-departmental team to audit the viability of switching to bottle-less water dispensers in City/Town owned and leased spaces.
- Provide access to municipal water in City/Town owned and leased spaces by maintaining, and installing new municipal water infrastructure, such as water fountains and well water systems.
- Commit to providing water-dispensing units (stationary or removable, such as water trucks that connect to fire hydrants) at City/Town organized and sponsored special events.
- Start a municipal water awareness campaign that encourages municipal water consumption in City/Town buildings. Work towards extending this awareness campaign to the broader public of the community.

'Right-to-know' policies

- Ensure that residents can access information about companies using municipal tap water or groundwater in the area (where jurisdictions apply) including the number of water bottlers in the municipality, company names, amount of water extracted and rates charged on a daily basis.

Foster accountability

- Develop and implement policies that enhance accountability including transparency and public consultation around the approval of the use of water for water bottling.



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MEMBER COMMUNICATION

FYI N°: 09-002

To the attention of the Clerk and Council
February 3, 2009

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Municipal Action on Bottled Water

Issue: Municipalities across Canada and in Ontario have recently taken action to encourage use of municipal tap water at municipal events and facilities.

Municipal councils across Canada, including 13 Ontario municipalities have taken action in recent months to limit the use of bottled water in municipal facilities, where appropriate, and to support the use of municipal tap water by residents and visitors. AMO understands that a number of other Ontario municipalities are also considering such initiatives.

Ontario councils taking action in this area include the cities of Sault Ste. Marie, London, Windsor, the Regional Municipality of Waterloo and the Town of Blue Mountains, amongst others. Across Canada, other municipalities such as St. John's, Newfoundland, Charlottetown, PEI, Altona, Manitoba, Toronto and the Region of Metro Vancouver have also taken action.

In some cases these actions have been supported through public education to increase awareness of the safety of municipal tap water, actions to increase the supply of municipal tap water at events through mobile water trucks and increase of supply of municipal tap water where necessary.

These measures complement long-standing positions taken by AMO and other municipal associations by increasing awareness of the affordability, health and safety of municipal tap water and the need for continuing public investments in infrastructure to provide affordable clean water to municipal residents. They also encourage stewardship of water as a valuable resource and help to reduce the amount of plastics in municipal waste streams.

Action:

Councils interested in investigating this issue are encouraged to contact those municipalities that have taken action.

This information is available in the Policy Issues section of the AMO website at www.amo.on.ca.

