

toxic free!

Dear Mayor and Council:

Over the past year, municipalities throughout the British Columbia region have been actively working on ways to enhance their local environment, to reduce waste and protect their water resources. We urge you to take an important step now to support public water and waste reduction by publicly encouraging the consumption of tap water over bottled water.

The action we urge you to take is fully in line in with the resolution adopted at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities convention in March, which urged "all municipalities to phase out the sale and purchase of bottled water at their own facilities where appropriate and where potable water is available." The FCM represents 1,775 municipalities across Canada.

In British Columbia, our municipal water systems are among the safest and strongest in the world. This year, the quality of water in Metro Vancouver will be even better, as the first of two filtration plants comes on line in September, eliminating any possibility of turbidity and reducing chlorine use.

Meanwhile bottled water, especially single serve water in PET plastic bottles, is leaving an enormous environmental footprint in our communities, including releases of carcinogenic substances to the environment where the plastic is manufactured. Just recently a new report published by Toxic Free Canada (available at <http://www.toxicfreecanada.ca/campaign.asp?c=11>) graphically outlines that toxic footprint, and also highlights the plastic waste being generated by PET-bottled water. According to the report, more than 130 million plastic bottles ended up in B.C. landfills in 2007, a 247 per cent increase since 2002. Of those, an estimated 44 million were PET plastic water bottles, the equivalent of 21,833 full-size pickup truck loads.

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. In addition, 43 municipalities have already passed legislation to phase out the provision and sale of bottled water on city/town property and promote public municipal water. Many more are currently exploring options for how to "turn on the tap" and phase out the bottle.

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.

As a network of organizations from across British Columbia 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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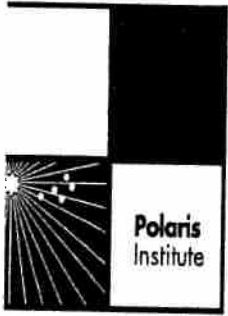
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DISTRICT OF METRO VANCOUVER

On Behalf of: Polaris Institute; Toxic Free Canada; Canadian Union of Public Employees BC; BC Federation of Labour; Sierra Youth Coalition; BC Government and Service Employees' Union; BC Teachers' Federation; Wilderness Committee



BC GOVERNMENT AND SERVICE EMPLOYEES' UNION  
bcgeu



WESTERN CANADA  
WILDERNESS  
COMMITTEE



British Columbia  
Teachers' Federation



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## 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.*

- Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) passed a resolution urging "all municipalities to phase out the sale and purchase of bottled water at their own facilities where appropriate".
- *Metro Vancouver Region, British Columbia:* The board voted to launch a public campaign to support tap water and urge local municipalities and residents to adopt a Tap Water Pledge to use tap water in place of bottled water where possible.
- *City of Vancouver, British Columbia:* Council voted to phase out the provision and sale of bottled water in appropriate city facilities and re-invest in water fountains.
- *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.
- *Altona, Manitoba:* Municipality phased out the provision of water coolers and bottled water in its offices.

### Canadian Statistics:

- 48 Municipalities from 8 provinces and 1 Territory have implemented restrictions on bottled water
- 32 Universities and Colleges have created bottled water free zones.

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### CASE STUDY: CITY OF TORONTO

DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER

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.

**FCM RESOLUTION – NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – MARCH 7, 2009**

**ENV09.1.02  
BOTTLED WATER**

**WHEREAS** bottled water consumes significant amounts of non-renewable fossil fuels to extract, package and transport water creating unnecessary air quality and climate change impacts;

**WHEREAS** it takes about three litres of water to manufacture a one litre plastic bottle of water;

**WHEREAS** bottled water companies use municipal water and groundwater sources when a growing percentage of Canadian municipalities have faced water shortages in recent years;

**WHEREAS** although bottled water creates a container that can be recycled, between 40% and 80% of empty bottles end up as litter and/or are placed directly into the garbage and take up unnecessary space in landfills;

**WHEREAS** tap water is safe, healthy, highly regulated and accessible to residents, employers, employees and visitors to Canadian municipalities and substantially more sustainable than bottled water; and

**WHEREAS** some municipalities have enacted by-laws to restrict the sale and purchase of water bottles within their own operations;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities urge all municipalities to phase out the sale and purchase of bottled water at their own facilities where appropriate and where potable water is available; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that municipalities be urged to develop awareness campaigns about the positive benefits and quality of municipal water supplies.

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