

Bottled Water

Be it resolved that the following Issues Policy on “Bottled Water” be adopted:

Preamble

Water, like education, is a public right, not a privilege. Like the invasion of commercial values into education, the treatment of water as a commodity that can be sold poses the risk of potentially denying access to this life sustaining resource. It is a common responsibility of all people and governments to ensure that water is used sensibly to minimise negative environmental impacts and guarantee the free and universal access to clean drinking water into the future.

However, most city water in Canada is much more highly regulated and monitored for quality than bottled water. In addition, public water systems are the most responsible mechanism for ensuring that water is accessible.

In addition, mass production of bottled water has negative environmental impacts due to the creation of landfills full of empty bottles and plastic leaching toxins endangering the surrounding environment and communities and posing hazardous risks.

Bottled water is one of the key products being pushed in the public school system and on college and university campuses across the country. Beverage exclusivity contracts on campuses are the marketing tool of choice for water bottling companies to guarantee access to the student and youth market.

Private beverage companies are engaged in aggressive marketing campaigns claiming that bottled water is the only safe source of drinking water available and creating a culture of dependence and reliance on private water sources that undermine public confidence in public water systems.

Buying bottled water sends a powerful message to our elected leaders that there is little need to maintain and improve Canada’s water infrastructure.

Policy

The Federation Supports:

- public ownership of natural water sources;
- adequate funding for clean and accessible public water systems;
- public drinking fountains in spaces and public buildings, including college and university campuses;
- enforced government regulations to establish standards and guidelines for public water systems that set international standards;
- government initiatives to clean up polluted water sources;
- bottled water bans for all events held by municipal, provincial or federal governments or public institutions;
- adequate funding and support for clean and accessible water systems nationwide;
- container deposit laws and other effective ways of cutting down the amount of bottles piling up in landfills and polluting the environment.

The Federation Opposes:

- the use of bottled water where safe drinking water is available;
- advertising of bottled water;
- the privatisation of natural water sources and water services;
- bulk water imports and exports;
- water takings by bottled water corporations of public water and public water sources;
- any change to public policy that serves the private and commercial interests of bottled water companies instead of the public interest;
- government under-funding of public water systems and water testing programmes;
- the allocation, sale or lease of land or natural resources by any level of government to bottled water companies; and
- national or international trade agreements that limit or undermine Canada’s ability to regulate and protect public water systems.