



**The recommendation(s) contained
in this report were adopted as
amended by City Council**

His Worship Mayor Ted Salci
and Members of the Municipal Council
City of Niagara Falls, Ontario

Members:

**Re: R-2009-06
Plastic Water Bottle Update**

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the City of Niagara Falls eliminate the sale of ^{plastic beverage bottles} ~~(bottled water)~~ at City owned and facilities, municipal buildings, and recreation facilities and parks effective May 1, 2009.
2. That staff develop a recommended implementation plan to increase the access to, and the availability of municipal water through public drinking fountains in municipal indoor and outdoor facilities, and outline the costs in the 2009 capital budget for the consideration of Council

BACKGROUND:

On April 28, 2008, the Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee (MYAC) presented a committee update to Niagara Falls City Council. MYAC requested that plastic bags be banned, not only from municipal buildings, but from the entire City. The MYAC supports eliminating the sale of bottled water at City owned facilities. The committee endorses environmental initiatives to guide Niagara Falls to become more sustainable through education and practical actions.

On November 4, 2008, report R-2008-32 was presented and approved by City Council directing staff to hold a Community Information forum to gather feedback from the community regarding the possibility of eliminating the sale of bottled water at municipal buildings, recreation facilities and parks.

Working Together to Serve Our Community

Community Services Department
Parks, Recreation & Culture

Summary of Community Information Forum

On December 4, 2008, the Park in the City Committee hosted a Community Information Forum at the MacBain Community Centre. Approximately 30 people attended the presentation and open forum. The event was advertised in the local newspaper(s) (Niagara Falls Review, Niagara This Week) three times leading up to the event. It should be noted that the City's current arena beverage supplier (vending and over the counter concessions) Pepsi Co. was also invited to attend.

Guest speakers included the following:

Frank Fohr, representative of the Park in the City Committee

Stuart Trew, Council of Canadians

Glen Hudgin, Niagara Region Public Health Department

Brad Whitelaw, Niagara Region Waste Management Services Division

For the most part, comments and questions following the presentation were very supportive of eliminating the sale of bottled water. One concern communicated by a sports organization was their loss of revenue from the sale of bottled water as they operate the concession stand at Oakes Park. There was also a request that the water at Oakes Park concession be looked, and the Region confirmed that an inspector would visit Oakes Park in the near future.

Summary of Ontario Bottled Water Network Meeting

Park in the City Committee Members attended an Ontario Bottled Water Network meeting held on Friday, January 9, 2009 in Toronto's City Hall. Thirty-one organizations and additional representatives attended the meeting which discussed the creation of an Ontario Network on bottled water. The forum reviewed existing bottled water initiatives/campaigns across Ontario and Canada. Opportunities were presented for moving forward in a unified/joint action with a follow-up meeting to be scheduled for March 2009.

Parks, Recreation and Culture Facilities and Parks

Parks, Recreation and Culture have eliminated the use of bottled water at all special events and meetings.

Bottled water is sold at the following City owned and operated locations:

- All City owned arenas through concessions and vending: Niagara Falls Memorial Arena, Stamford/Jack Bell Arena, Chippawa Willoughby Memorial arena
- Coronation 50 plus Recreation Centre
- F. H. Leslie pool concession

Bottled water is sold by community group at the following locations:

- Oakes park concession, GNBA Auxiliary
- Kalar park and E. E. Mitchelson Park
- various City parks for special events

The organizations provide bottled water for sale or to their teams as a beverage at City sport park locations and many of these parks do not have a concession or water fountain source.

Bottles water is sold by our third party operator (lease agreement) at the following location:

- MacBain Community Centre - Centre Court Café and vending machines

Recent Ministry of the Environment (MOE) Ratings

MOE rating of Niagara Falls water treatment plant:
100% from April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007

MOE rating of Niagara Falls water distribution system:
99.65% over the same time period

Bottled water in Canada is treated as food and is regulated under the Food and Drug Act and its regulations. As such, water bottling plants are inspected on average only once every three years.

Niagara Region Health Department

High quality, clean safe tap water is produced and distributed by regional and local governments in Ontario under strict provincial standards and legislated controls. Rigorous testing is constantly carried out to ensure the quality of tap water. Ontario probably has some of the safest, highest quality tap water in the world. Since Walkerton, Ontario has the highest standards for drinking water in Canada (Sierra Legal Defence Fund Report Card).

Municipal Action on Bottled Water

Municipalities across Canada and in Ontario have recently taken action to encourage use of municipal tap water at municipal events and facilities (AMO Member Communication).

According to recent Member Communication provided by AMO, 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.

Canada's Parliament is currently considering a ban on plastic water bottles at the Parliament Buildings.

Environmental Impact

To reduce the impact, the David Suzuki Foundation supports stop providing/selling bottled water and to increase access to water fountains in public buildings such as arenas and community centres.

1. Regional Impact of Plastic Bottles

In Niagara Region, plastic bottles accounted for approximately 1.6 kg/household/year in the residual waste stream (i.e., landfill & incineration) and 6.6 kg/household/year in the recycling stream. Based on plastic bottles collected curbside, Niagara residents recycled approximately 80% of the plastic bottles. The other 20% went into the residual waste stream.

Based on the number of Niagara Region households, it is estimated that the Region disposes of approximately 1,521 tonnes of plastic bottles per year.

Plastic bottles have an extremely high volume to weight ratio. As such, plastic bottles occupy a disproportionately large volume in recycling trucks (i.e., increases cost of transportation).

The recent change of the economy has led to a reduction in the demand for recycled materials. PET is currently at \$107 per tonne, from a high of \$440 per tonne. In addition, the market revenue received from PET does not cover the combined cost of collection and processes (\$265 per tonne).

Currently, 41% of recycling collection and net processing costs are paid for by industry stewards; the remainder is paid by Niagara taxpayers. However, if plastic bottles are landfilled or become street litter, the financial costs are fully borne by Niagara tax payers.

2. **Recycling is Not the Answer**

Plastic recycling only minimally reduces the amount of resources used to make plastics. Recycled plastic is a small percentage of what is manufactured and the amount is actually decreasing. Even those active in administering recycling programs have come to recognize that plastics consumption is encouraged by recycling.

The City of Toronto, which has just banned bottled water from its civic centres, will phase it out of all city buildings by 2011, claims it recycled 1,000 tonnes, or 65 million plastic water bottles, last year. However, there are between 100 and 125 million bottled water consumed in Toronto, which results as many as 50% end up in a landfill and not recycled.

According to the Container Recycling Institute, 86% of plastic water bottles used in the United States become garbage or litter. Nestle Waters Canada conducted a pilot project in the province of Quebec and touted an 85% success rate. However, this still means 15% of plastic water bottles end up as waste (i.e., in landfills). Incinerating used plastic bottles produces toxic byproducts such as chlorine gas and ash containing heavy metals.

Although recyclable, many plastic water bottles end up in landfill (i.e., 35 million polyethylene bottles end up in Toronto landfill sites each year). Buried plastic water bottles can take up to 1,000 years to degrade.

3. **Energy Consumption**

According to the Earth Policy Institute, manufacturing the 29 billion plastic bottles used for water in the United States each year requires the equivalent of more than 17 million barrels of crude oil. Imagine filling a third of the plastic bottle with oil and you'll get an idea how much that is.

In the United States, the Pacific Institute estimates the annual fossil fuel footprint of plastic water bottle consumption to be the equivalent of 50 million barrels of oil (i.e., production, transportation, disposal) - enough to run three million cars for one year. The amount of fuel required to transport bottled water in the U.S. alone is equivalent to 38,000 eighteen-wheel transport trucks delivering water weekly.

4. **Destruction of Water Resources**

According to Environment Canada, 20% of municipalities have faced water shortages in recent years. The myth that Canada has an abundance of water to share is losing its strength.

Plastic water bottle companies water to production ratios are roughly 3 to 1; for every 3 litres of freshwater that the plastic water bottle industry takes from the earth, only 1 litre of plastic water bottle is actually produced.

Two thirds of the Earth is water, however; only 2% of the freshwater are drinkable. However, 1.6% of the total 2% is locked up in polar icecaps. According to the United Nations, by 2025, over two-thirds of our world's population will not have enough water to sustain the basics of life.

Implementation Strategy

Next Steps:

Key to a successful campaign to eliminate the sale of bottled water in Municipal facilities and encouraging the overall reduction in the use of the bottled water throughout the community is education and awareness.

The City of Niagara Falls needs to promote city drinking water to:

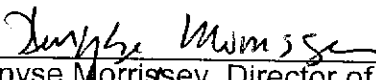
- Increase the awareness of top quality and reliable drinking water
- Address any misconceptions and the misinformation about drinking water not being safe or a health risk.
- Ensure municipal water is accessible to City staff, residents and visitors to public spaces, municipal buildings and City facilities by providing safe and reliable drinking water options (water fountains, refillable water containers).

Public awareness and education can be achieved through educational posters, information on City's web site, increase the number of public water fountains, temporary water filling stations at special events in parks and promotion to bring your own refillable water container.

Phase	Location/Equipment	Action	Target Implementation dates
1	Outdoor parks and playing fields	- inform and educate all users bottled water will not to be sold at City facilities	March 2009 at allocation meeting
2	Arenas	- review contractual requirements and inform beverage providers City will be eliminating the sale of bottled water - eliminate the sale of bottled water	March 2009 May 1, 2009

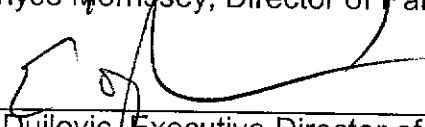
3	Vending machines and contracted food services at the MacBain community centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - review contractual requirements - create education and awareness materials - eliminate the sale of bottled water - eliminate the use of bottled water in all meeting rooms for all bookings. 	<p>March 2009 phased in 2009</p> <p>May 1, 2009</p>
4	Coronation Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inform and educate all users bottled water will not to be sold at City facilities - eliminate the sale of bottled water 	<p>March 2009</p> <p>May 1, 2009</p>
5	Indoor Facilities and Sport Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - review access to public drinking water including fountains - install on existing fountains long spigots/goose neck to allow people to fill reusable bottles; - budget as required for new fountains 	<p>March 2009 - review</p> <p>2009/2010 - budget and install new fountains</p>

Recommended by:



 Denyse Morrissey, Director of Parks, Recreation & Culture

Approved by:



 Ed Dujlovic, Executive Director of Community Services