



## Article 38: Drinking Water in Single-Serving PET Bottles Bylaw

Presentation to the Board of Selectmen  
March 7th, 2011

Good evening. I'm Jean Hill. Last year Town Meeting approved my Article to ban the sale of drinking water in plastic bottles, but the Article was not written as a bylaw and could not take effect. This year I have a valid bylaw and am asking for your support once again.

Article 38: Drinking Water in Single-Serving PET Bottles Bylaw

Article 38: Ms. Hill moves: that the Town vote to take affirmative action under Article 38 as printed in the Warrant.

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Here is a draft of the motion for this year's Article #38.

Article 38: Drinking Water in Single-Serving PET Bottles Bylaw

“When we’re done, tap water will be relegated to showers and washing dishes.”

---Susan Wellington, former VP of Marketing for Pepsi-owned Gatorade

“We sell water...so we need to be clever.”

---Jeffery Caso, former VP of Nestle

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Here are a couple of notable quotes from the bottled water industry. The three largest players are Pepsi, Coca-Cola and Nestle. Bottled water came about as a strategy to expand market share when soda sales were shrinking.

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### Concord Statistics

(estimated)

- Population = 15,400
- Annual bottled water consumption = 2.6 Million 1/2-ltr bottles
- Bottles discarded = 1.8M
- Bottles recycled = .8M
- Tons of bottled water waste and recycling each year = 45



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Clever indeed. In 2008, Americans consumed 9 billion gallons of bottled water. That's 30 gallons each for every man, woman and child. In Concord, that's over two and a half million bottles with almost 2 million of them discarded. Many of us are unaware of the consequences of this consumption. We think that bottled water is cleaner, safer, more natural, and more convenient than Concord's tap water. It is time that we faced some hard truths about bottled water.

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### **Bottled Water...**

- **Is not safer than Concord's tap**
- **Is much more costly than tap**
- **Wastes precious resources**
- **Harms the environment**
- **Hurts local communities**
- **Is unjust.**

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There are so many problems with bottled water that it is hard to know where to start. We will briefly cover these one by one.

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Bottled water is not safer than Concord's tap...

GAO

United States Government Accountability Office  
Report to Congressional Requesters

June 2009

BOTTLED WATER

FDA Safety and  
Consumer Protections  
Are Often Less  
Stringent Than  
Comparable EPA  
Protections for Tap  
Water

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Here is what the Governmental Accounting Office reported in 2009. When we compare the quality control over bottled water to that over our local water, we see many gaps. The Food and Drug Administration relies on the bottled water industry to police itself. There are no standard testing procedures and no easy way to see testing results. There have been over 100 bottled water recalls since 1990 for contaminants ranging from algae, yeast and mold to coliform bacteria, arsenic and benzene. In most cases, the public was notified months after the contaminated water was found; in several cases, the public was not notified at all.

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Bottled water is much more costly than tap...



Plus disposal and recycling costs...

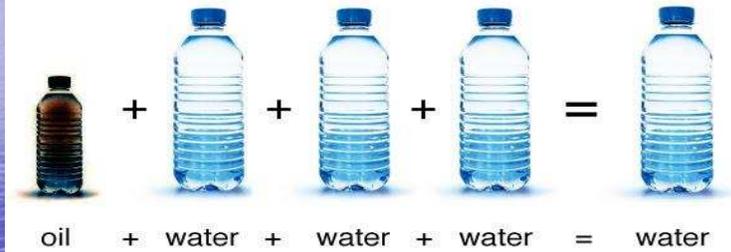
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For the price of a bottle of water, you can have 1,500 large glasses of Concord tap. Concord citizens also pay on the back end for the disposal and recycling of used plastic water bottles. Discarded bottles end up in landfills or as litter. Concord's recycled bottles take a long trip to North Carolina and Georgia and may eventually end up in China or India.

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**Bottled water wastes precious resources...**



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It takes a quarter of a liter of oil and 3 liters of water to deliver 1 liter of bottled water. Oil is a finite fossil fuel and makes us dependent on the Middle East. As we'll see in a minute, water is precious too. All of this wasted resource to deliver bottled water to a town where well-regulated tap water is readily available to everyone.

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Bottled water harms the environment...



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Each year nearly 1 million tons of plastic water bottles end up in landfills or as litter. Many of these bottles make their way to rivers, lakes and oceans where they harm birds and fish and other aquatic life. Plastic never fully decomposes in the water; it just breaks into small pieces. PET bottle pieces float down to the ocean floor and are ingested by fish. We don't know how this might affect the ocean food chain and ultimately what ends up on our dinner table.

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Bottled water hurts local communities...



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Across the country, communities have had to fight to keep control over their local water. At the foot of Mt. Shasta in the tiny town of McCloud, California, residents spent years fighting off Nestle's bid to extract half a Billion gallons of water annually. Maine has been called the Saudi Arabia of water. Several Maine communities are now fighting to keep their water by seeking moratoriums on bottled water company plans and passing local ordinances.

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Bottled water is unjust...



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Over 1 billion people today lack access to clean and safe drinking water. The World Bank predicts that the wars of tomorrow will be fought over water. On the right, a young Zambian girl waits in a long line to fill water canisters at a privately-owned spigot. The Zambian boy on the left walks several miles every day to fetch water for his family. Normally fetching water is a girl's job. He does it now because his sister has died from cholera. How can we justify our consumption of bottled water if we know all this?

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There are enormous problems with bottled water. We need to take immediate action.

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**Communities Taking Action**

- CA: LA, San Francisco, San Jose, Sonoma County
- CO: Denver
- CT: Danbury, New Fairfield, West Hartford
- IL: Chicago, Oak Park
- MA: Boston, Cambridge, Northampton, Somerville
- NH: Barnstead
- NY: New York City, Suffolk County
- RI: Providence

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Concerned citizens across the country ARE taking action. 3 States – Colorado, Illinois and New York – have banned governmental purchases of bottled water. More than 100 cities and towns have taken action to cut taxpayer spending on bottled water and reinvest in their own public water systems. Here are a few of them.

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**Colleges/Universities Taking Action**

- Brown University
- Brandeis University
- Tufts University
- University of San Francisco
- University of Seattle
- Depauw University
- University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point
- Marymount Manhattan College
- Muhlenberg College
- University of Washington in St. Louis
- Seattle University

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Thus far, 11 colleges and universities have taken steps to eliminate the sale of bottled water on campus. In this growing movement, we have both an opportunity and an obligation to act.

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## **Concord Takes Action: Article 38**

- Focus on single-serve PET bottles (1 liter or less) of plain drinking water
- Simple enforcement
- Exemption during state of emergency
- Empowers town leadership

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Here is how Concord can take meaningful action in a measured way. We focus on plain drinking water in single-serving plastic bottles, not all bottled water. The Town Manager decides which Department will enforce the bylaw. A simple spot-check of each location is required every six months. The cost of enforcement will be minimal. If there is a declared State of Emergency, the Bylaw is suspended. If the costs of the program become unreasonable, the Board of Selectmen, after a public hearing, can decide on necessary action. In summary, the Bylaw is intended to be reasonable and manageable, yet effective.

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## **This Bylaw is important because...**

**There are too many problems with bottled water.**

**Bottled water doesn't fit with our values.**

**We can be part of a growing movement.**

**We can set a legal precedent.**

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As we've just seen, there are MANY problems with bottled water. As a community, we care about the impact of our choices, and we are willing to choose actions that help our world without being driven by what's convenient. We can be a leader in this growing movement by taking the next step to set policy for an entire community. And if this Bylaw passes muster at the Attorney General's office, it will guide and inspire countless other communities and citizens across the country.

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**Community Benefits**

- ❖ Reduced waste and pollution
- ❖ Reduced cost of waste disposal and recycling fees
- ❖ \$\$\$ savings from switching to tap water
- ❖ Increased sales of good alternatives
- ❖ A sense of accomplishment
- ❖ Concord as a role model for others

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Our community will see many benefits from the adoption of this Bylaw. The first word in “Reduce, Reuse and Recycle” is REDUCE. We can remove over 2 and a half million plastic bottles from our waste and recycling stream. Concord citizens will save money by turning to their tap. Our merchants can sell more reusable bottles and filters. We will be proud to have made a meaningful choice. And we will be a role model for those who visit and other communities who are considering taking action.

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**Vote Yes on Article 38**



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What makes Concord Concord? It is the determination of Concordians to stand up and be counted in our nation's historic struggle to live up to its ideals. Now we have an opportunity to once again stand up and be counted, to once again fight illegitimate authority, the authority by which corporations claim the right to fill our stores with an unnecessary, wasteful, defective and destructive product. Join me and vote yes for Article 38. Concord will lead a grand parade that other towns will want to join! Thank you for your support.