

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE SEPTEMBER 2, 2008**

### **ELIMINATION OF SALES OF BOTTLED WATER IN ALL CITY OF VAUGHAN BUILDINGS**

Councillor Shefman recommends:

1. That the City of Vaughan cease the use of single-use plastic water bottles at all meetings and events sponsored by the City as of September 2008;
2. That the City of Vaughan ceases the sale of single-use plastic water bottles in all city-run buildings, arenas and community centres;
3. That staff be directed to report back to the Environment Committee on the implementation plan for this recommendation and that an implementation schedule be established that will put this recommendation into full operation no later than December 31, 2008.
4. That staff report back to the Environment Committee on a public awareness strategy relating to this recommendation by October 2008;
5. That staff be directed to report back to the Environment Committee with respect to the potential for seeking provincial support to impose a deposit on single-use plastic bottles.

#### **Economic Impact**

1. A slight economic benefit resulting from ceasing the purchasing of single-use plastic water bottles for City meetings.
2. Some relief from emptying garbage receptacles in public places that may receive less of these bottles.

#### **Communications Plan**

1. Media release to inform the public
2. To be determined by the report on the public awareness strategy.

#### **Purpose**

To eliminate the use of single-use water bottles at the City of Vaughan

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

1. The City of Vaughan and York Region operates and maintains a highly regulated and sophisticated water distribution system that meets some of the most stringent water quality requirements in the world.
2. Vaughan Council believes that it has a responsibility to initiate progressive action and set a positive example to the Vaughan community on environmental matters.
3. There is no data readily available to support marketing claims that may lead some consumers to believe that bottled water is more pure or healthier to consume than Vaughan tap water.
4. Single-use bottled water bottles sold in Vaughan is up to 3,000 times more expensive than water from the tap in Vaughan, even though some estimates suggest approximately 25% of the bottle water originates from municipal water systems.

5. As reported in the August 19 edition of the National Post, "the Sierra Club estimates that just under one million tons of plastic are used in the manufacturing of water bottles, translating to approximately 17 million barrels of oil," and that the resultant resource extraction, packaging and distribution of single-use bottled water creates unnecessary air quality and climate change impacts and consumes unnecessary oil in the manufacture of plastic bottles and in the fuel used in the transportation of bottled water to the consumer.

6. Single-use plastic bottles, although easily recycled through the City of Vaughan's recycling program, tend to end up in the garbage stream and are ultimately delivered to a landfill site resulting in increased costs for the taxpayer.

7. Single-use plastic bottles have become one of the most significant litter problems throughout the City of Vaughan. In a recent survey in a Vaughan neighbourhood, in a five kilometer route at least 31 single-use water bottles were seen on the streets.

8. Vaughan tap water is safe, healthy and accessible to residents of Vaughan and visitors, and substantially more environmentally sustainable than single-use plastic water bottles. Vaughan tap water is readily available at most indoor facilities either in the form of a faucet in a bathroom or drinking fountain and, where it is not available a plan will be put into motion to increase access to municipal water subject to water quality requirements, budget and other considerations.

9. While normally this motion would be initiated at the Environment Committee, in light of the Committee not meeting until September 29, 2008 and that this issue being one needing immediate action, it is being brought directly to the Committee of the Whole.

#### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020**

To lead and promote Environmental Sustainability – To preserve, protect and enhance Vaughan's natural and built environment through responsible leadership and innovative policies, practices and education.

#### **Regional Implications**

A certain cost saving if the public awareness aspect of this recommendation results in fewer single-use plastic water bottles are discarded in the garbage stream.

#### **Conclusion**

Single-use plastic water bottles will no longer be sold in City Hall cafeteria, from City-owned or city administered concessions and vending machines in public facilities;

Single-use plastic water bottles will no longer be purchased and provided at meetings and events of Council and Committees;

A public awareness campaign will be developed to support the rationale for these changes, emphasizing the quality of municipal water and importance of not littering;

An implementation schedule be established that will put this recommendation into full operation no later than December 31, 2008.

**Attachments**

1. Globe and Mail Article
2. Liberal/Vaughan Citizen Article
3. Toronto Star Article

**Report prepared by:**

Debi Traub, Council Executive Assistant

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Shefman  
Councillor, Ward 5

**THE GLOBE AND MAIL****First it was plastic bags. Now water bottles are the new faux pas**

The Globe And Mail  
Monday, August 18, 2008  
Page: L1  
Section: Globe Life  
Byline: Carly Weeks

London, Ont., could become one of the first cities in Canada to stop selling bottled water in municipal buildings as a growing consumer backlash against the product takes hold across the country.

London's city council is set to vote tonight on a proposal to eliminate the sales of bottled water in all city-run buildings, arenas and community centres, and many expect it will be approved.

The issue has sparked a heated debate in the city over the past several months and highlights a growing movement against the plastic bottles.

The backlash against bottled water has been quietly brewing among environmentalists as well as consumers who are concerned by the amount of energy it takes to transport the bottles, and by how much waste they produce, especially considering that most areas of Canada have safe, high-quality municipal water supplies.

Like the plastic bag before it, bottled water is quickly becoming the new battleground in the fight to reduce waste and help the environment.

Many communities and school boards across Canada are now considering restrictions on their sale.

Unlike other bottled drinks, such as juice and pop, water has been singled out by environmentalists because it is seen as an unnecessary product that produces a significant amount of waste.

Municipal water systems in Canada are constantly inspected, and the country's tap water supply is generally of high quality, which means there is no need to waste resources shipping bottles to consumers throughout the country, said William Rees, professor of ecological economics in the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia.

In fact, two of the most popular brands - Dasani and Aquafina - use water from municipal water supplies in Canada.

Furthermore, while the bottles can be recycled, the process consumes a great amount of energy, and a significant portion of bottles are often thrown in the garbage and end up in landfills, Prof. Rees said.

"It's a completely unnecessary addition to the shopping basket to purchase bottled water," he said. "I think people ought to wake up. Consumers are pretty gullible."

Canada's per capita consumption of bottled water jumped from 28.4 litres in 1998 to 66 litres in 2006, according to the Beverage Marketing Corporation. Nearly three in 10 households said they drank bottled water at home in 2006, according to Statistics Canada.

But there are signs the tide is turning against bottled water. In addition to London, a number of communities, including Kitchener, Ont., Charlottetown, St. John's, Vancouver and Nelson, B.C., as well as major school boards in Toronto and Ottawa, have either moved forward with plans to eliminate bottled water sales, or are considering such restrictions.

In London, the issue has stirred up significant debate. If city council votes in favour of the proposed restrictions, bottled water will no longer be sold at city hall, or at other municipal buildings, starting Sept. 1. After that, bottles will

# Our water nearly perfect, tests say

*York Region's water  
tests 99.3 per cent in  
1,800 tests by MoE*

BY DAVID FLEISCHER  
*Staff Writer*

On a summer day, a glass of water from your tap can be cool, refreshing and, it turns out, some of the cleanest in the province.

York Region's water scored a near-perfect 99.3 per cent after the Environment Ministry performed more than 1,800 tests on it.

Only 14 of the tests on our wells, treatment facilities and distribution network indicated a need for improvement and York Region says they have already been addressed.

None posed any threat to health and safety, according to the region.

Well supplies in Aurora, Stouffville, Schomberg, Queensville and Holland Landing were among the few tested areas to not meet 100-per-cent compliance. The lowest score was 97.4 per cent.

"Our high scores are an indication of the consistency of excellence demonstrated by York Region's Environmental Services staff and their commitment to the health and wellbeing of our residents," York regional chairperson Bill Fisch said.

▶ **FUTURE SHOP**

**DVLL**  
3GB DDR2 Memory,  
250GB Hard Drive.

Limited quantities, no raincheck.  
Offer ends August 21, 2008.

» [Click here](#)

**the star.com**

## Plastic water bottles on city hit list

**November report will cover broad range of options to cut down on waste to landfills**

August 21, 2008

**JOHN SPEARS**  
CITY HALL BUREAU

As other cities target plastic water bottles, Toronto is taking a broad look at a variety of packaging materials – including bottles – to cut down on its waste going to landfill.

Mayor David Miller said the bottled water policy is part of the city's overall goal of diverting 70 per cent of waste from the dump by 2010.

City staff will propose new policies in November to curb the use of plastic bags, takeout coffee cups and polystyrene food containers, says Geoff Rathbone, the city's general manager of solid waste.



TOBIN GRIMSHAW/TORONTO STAR

Roughly 100 million plastic bottles flow into Toronto's waste system. About 65 million are captured through recycling; the rest go to the dump.

Plastic water bottles were added to the list of targeted materials earlier this year, at the urging of Councillor Bill Saunderson (Ward 13, Parkdale-High Park). He had proposed imposing a royalty on water used by companies that take city water, filter it and sell it in bottles.

That's a different strategy than the option chosen by London, Ont., which is to ban water bottles from city facilities.

Rathbone said in an interview that the report due in November will cover a much broader range of options – and larger number of materials – than bottled water.

That report will propose a comprehensive policy on "in-store packaging" – like takeout food containers and plastic bags that are filled in stores.

While water bottles are filled at bottling plants rather than in stores, they've been rolled into the policy review.

Miller told reporters that Torontonians should drink the city's tap water rather than buying bottles. "It's more pure than leading brands of water," he said. "Find a container that's portable and use your tap water. It's terrific tap water. It's to the highest standard. That's what I think people should do."

Rathbone said the policy review will cover four options for cutting waste. They are:

An outright ban on some materials used for in-store packaging;

Financial measures, such as a tax on plastic bags;

A local deposit-return system for some items. (Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker, who chairs the works committee, has previously mused aloud about having a deposit-return system for batteries);

A law that would allow customers to unwrap items in a store, leaving the packaging behind for the store to dispose of. That would presumably encourage retailers to put pressure on manufacturers to reduce packaging.

City lawyers are studying whether any or all of the options are permitted under the City of Toronto Act, Rathbone said.

He figures that roughly 100 million plastic bottles of all types flow into Toronto's waste system. About 65 million – that's roughly 1,000 tonnes of plastic – are captured in the recycling system, but the remainder end up mixed with garbage and going to the dump.

*With files from Vanessa Lu*