

Repeal of Bottled Water Ban

MOTION

Mr. Benn moves: to repeal in its entirety, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, §32, the bylaw known as “Drinking Water in Single-Serve PET Bottles Bylaw” adopted under Article 32 of the 2012 Annual Town Meeting, as voted on April 25, 2012 and which became effective January 1, 2013, that restricts the sale of non-sparkling, unflavored drinking water in single-serving polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles of 1 liter (34 ounces) or less in the Town of Concord.

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Why Repeal the ban now?

- Banning the sale of bottled water in Concord never made sense
- The problems cited by the proponents of the ban are not solved by banning the sale of bottled water in Concord
- Leaving the ill-conceived ban in place will give it the appearance of legitimacy and invite future bans. (shopping bags, meat, leaf-blowers)
- Repealing the ban now will signal that Concord is not a community that will tolerate nonsense legislation, we are serious about preserving the environment and seek serious solutions to serious problems

Benefits of Bottled Water

- Water is, without question, the healthiest drink option
- Bottled water does not contain chlorine, potassium hydroxide, polyphosphate, or sodium fluoride
- Bottled water is generally considered safe for people with weakened immune systems (HIV/AIDS, Persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, some elderly and infants)
- Bottled water is heavily regulated by the FDA and subject to a more stringent testing schedule (on a per-unit basis) than public water supplies.
- Our own Fire Departments still uses bottled water as part of their emergency response, and Emerson Hospital continues to use it to ensure the safety and hydration of patients.



Benefits of Bottled Water

- The American Red Cross responds to some 70,000 disaster every year with pallets of life-saving bottled water for the poorest minorities, women, children, and the elderly
- Recently, First Lady Michelle Obama joined with Partnership for a Healthier America, to encourage people to drink more water, both bottled and tap
- The bottles are 100% recyclable
- They contain much less plastic than common alternatives



ARTICLE 3

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- 1.5 Liter water bottles contain 73% more plastic than 20 oz. single serve
- 20 oz. soda bottles contain 93% more plastic than 20 oz. single serve
- 20 oz. sport drink bottles contain 153% more plastic than 20 oz. single serve

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Ban proponents claim that bottled water is taking other peoples water by nefarious means

- If they were taking public water illegally, then the problem is best solved via legal means
- The standard practice is for bottling companies to work with municipalities to gain access to certain groundwater supplies for a fee which helps fund infrastructure improvements, emergency services, and schools
- Bottled water companies actively support comprehensive groundwater management practices that provide for future needs of this important resource
- Even if we were to take the proponent's claim at face value, their "solution" leaves sodas and hundreds of other drink options (including over-sized water bottles) intact.

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Ban proponents claim that bottled water is responsible for global climate change

- The fact is that this claim is made of almost every human activity.
 - All plastic
 - All automobile use (even electric relies on energy generated by burning)
 - All airline use
 - Almost all use of electricity
- We can help reduce emissions by buying locally, and recycling



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We have a lot in common with those who favor top over bottled water

I fully support:

- The addition of several new public water fountains that complement our existing fountains
- Programs to educate the public on the benefits of reusable bottled water
- Public recycle bins that are positioned next to every public trash receptacle in town
- Convenient, comprehensive home recycling
- Voluntary solarization program



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Like the proponents of the ban on bottled water in town, I would like to see a reduction in the use of fossil fuels where possible, I would like to see a general reduction in our use of plastics, chemicals, and other synthetic substances where possible. This is a worthy collective goal that can be achieved through educational and public-relations efforts without infringing on individual liberty

In the absence of this infringement, we could have come to an overwhelming agreement at 2010 Town Meeting

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