

## Global Campaigns News

### Canada: Say goodbye to bottled water to save environment, money

Posted: April 22, 2008

The Chronicle Herald. By Joey Fitzpatrick -

EACH YEAR, April 22 marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970.

Earth Day is a time to reflect on how small changes by individuals can have a huge cumulative effect, and then actually make those changes.

One simple step you can take to reduce your environmental footprint, and save a few bucks, is to not purchase bottled water.

"Somehow we became addicted to this bottled water trend, and it's senseless in every way," says environmental educator Geoff Green. "It's bad for the environment, and it's bad for your pocketbook."

Green's passion for clean water is inextricably tied to his passion for the Polar regions. He founded Students on Ice and has led 104 expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctic.

According to Statistics Canada, nearly one-third of all Canadian households are choosing to drink bottled water over tap water, a staggering fact, considering data shows that nearly 88 per cent of all disposable water bottles aren't recycled, resulting in about 70 million bottles dumped as waste in North America alone.

It's especially wasteful when you consider there's a perfectly good alternative — tap water with a filter — at our fingertips.

"It's been shown that it takes three litres of water to produce one litre of bottled water," Green says. This calculation factors in a production process in which much water is wasted, as well as the packaging, transportation and distribution.

The two-decade trend toward bottled water is beginning to reverse. Some universities are creating bottled water-free zones on campus. Some businesses are doing the same and major conferences are refusing to serve bottled water.

"I would like to see it become a social taboo like smoking, where it's just not cool," Green says. "It's really a no-brainer."

There are many small steps you can take to go green without drastically altering your daily routine. A few of these include:

- Take a pass on paper or plastic. Avoid using either disposable paper or plastic shopping bags. Plastic bags can take as much as 1,000 years to break down. Instead, bring reusable shopping bags with you.

- Think global, eat local. Be conscious of field-to-table food miles. Purchase as much in-season, locally grown produce as possible. Fruits and veggies are very healthy for people, but if they've travelled thousands of kilometres to reach you, they're not so healthy for the environment.

- Reduce water waste. Make an effort to reduce the amount of water you use in your household. Take shorter showers; only wash full loads of clothes and dishes; turn off the tap when brushing your teeth; collect rainwater in barrels for your gardening needs; and when replacing old toilets look into new low-flow or dual-flush toilets. Instead of running the tap for several minutes to get a nice cold glass of water, keep a pitcher filled with water in the fridge.

- Save your energy. Reduce energy consumption around your home by replacing old light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs, turning out lights when they're not in use and air drying clothes and dishes as often as possible. Turn off or unplug all appliances completely, instead of just leaving them on standby. This will save energy and you may even notice a decrease in your electricity bills.

- Car pool, cycle, walk, or take public transit. Using those options to get to work saves resources.

- Spot cleaning your clothes saves water and reduces the amount of laundry you do. Often a small stain can be cleaned on its own, without having to wash the entire garment. When you do wash your clothes, opt for cold water. A whopping 85 to 90 per cent of the energy used by washing machines is just for heating the water.

- And, remember the order of the words in the motto reduce, reuse, recycle. Somehow we've got that turned around and put recycling at the front of the line. Recycling is meant to be the third and final approach. First and foremost, we should reduce the amount we consume, and then reuse wherever possible.

([jfitzpatrick@herald.ca](mailto:jfitzpatrick@herald.ca))

Joey Fitzpatrick is a Halifax-based writer.

#### Stay Connected

Enter your email address to receive more information and participate in campaigns.

\*Your Email:

#### Get the Book

Buy the NEW **Inside the Bottle** book [here](#).



#### CAMPAIGN Activities

##### JOIN THE BOTTLED WATER FREE ZONES CAMPAIGN

Create a bottled water free zone in your classroom, student union, workplace, union local, community centre, City Hall buildings, environmental social justice or faith based group, and more! click [here](#) to find out how you can participate in the campaign - [Read more](#)

##### LAUNCH OF THE CAMPUS BOTTLED WATER FREE ZONES CAMPAIGN FOR WORLD WATER DAY

Click [here](#) to download the campaign leaflet and poster - [Read more](#)

##### November 21st campus day of action update and results

Read student organizer's comments and see pictures, click [here](#) - [Read more](#)

##### Ottawa Water Study Action Group - next meeting May 27

OWSAG is working on a campaign to encourage Ottawa City Council to stop supporting the bottled water industry and rather, encourage the consumption of tap water. Sign a support letter at [here](#). Next OWSAG meeting is Tuesday May 27, 12:00, 180 Metcalfe St. Suite 500, Ottawa. - [Read more](#)

##### Water workers in Peru urgently request solidarity

For more information, click [here](#) - [Read more](#)

#### CAMPAIGN Tools

**Campaign tools available for order** Click [here](#) to find out how to order campaign stickers and pamphlets.

**Community Organizing Package** This package outlines some useful ideas and tools for building a campaign challenging the bottled water industry in Canada. Click [here](#)

**Sample Resolution to ban Bottled Water** Click [here](#) to view

**Letter to Canadian Mayors** Click [here](#) to download a copy of the letter Polaris Institute sent to 28 Canadian Mayors encouraging them to reconsider municipal expenditures on bottled water

**San Francisco Executive Directive** Use this example in a campaign to encourage your local government to ban bottled water. Click [here](#) for a copy

**Student awareness to action kit PART 1**  
A tool kit to challenge the bottled water industry and beverage exclusivity contracts at school and on campus  
Find part 1 of the kit [here](#)

**Student awareness to action kit PART 2**  
Find part 2 of the kit [here](#)

**Utility Calculator for Vending Machines**  
Calculate the energy consumption of your institution's vending machines  
Find calculators [here](#)