

TOWN OF AJAX REPORT



Report To: General Government Committee

Submitted By: Howie Dayton
Director, Recreation & Culture

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Facility Manager, McLean Community Centre

Subject: Phasing Out the Sale of Bottled Water in Town Facilities

Ward(s): All

Date of Meeting: June 4, 2009

Reference: January 22, 2009 Amended Council Resolution - Bottled Water

Recommendation:

That the sale and provision of bottled water at Town owned facilities and events be phased out by December 31, 2011 as existing vending and concession agreements expire; and,

That existing and future Town owned facilities include sufficient provisions for access to municipal tap water.

Background:

Following the staff report on Bottled Water, dated January 22, 2009, Council provided direction to staff to report back on the feasibility of establishing a bottled water free pilot zone and to identify potential locations.

On February 3, 2009, The Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) released a communication to members articulating its long standing position of "increasing the awareness of the affordability, health and safety of municipal tap water." They also "encourage the stewardship of tap water as a valuable resource and help to reduce the amount of plastics in municipal waste streams." A copy of the release has been attached to this report as Appendix "A".

On March 7, 2009 The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), which is Canada's national municipal organization, issued a resolution further urging "all municipalities to phase out the sale and purchase of bottled water at their own facilities where appropriate, and where potable water is available." It also calls for municipalities to "develop awareness campaigns about the positive benefits and quality of municipal water supplies." A copy of this release has been attached to this report as Appendix "B".

A staff committee comprised of Recreation & Culture, Operations & Environmental Services, Legislative and Information Services and Corporate Communications met to review the resolution of Council, the recent publications by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities as well as to investigate the feasibility of establishing a

bottled water free zone as per Council's direction.

In the Province of Ontario, there are currently 31 municipalities and 6 school boards that have recently implemented restrictions on the use of bottled water in municipal facilities, where appropriate, and to support the use of municipal tap water by residents and visitors.

Discussion:

The FCM resolution brought awareness and attention to the impact the production of bottled water has on our environment. It is felt the establishing of a bottled water free area would limit the ability of the Town of Ajax to endorse the recommendation made by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and ultimately limit our ability to positively impact the local environment and build awareness for this important issue.

Staff are therefore recommending that a bottled water free zone not be established at a particular location within Ajax but rather that the sale and provision of bottled water at Town owned facilities and events be phased out by December 31, 2011 when all current vendor contracts will have expired.

Existing agreements for vending and concessions at the Ajax and McLean Community Centres, are currently in place through December 2011. Agreements for concession operations at the Village Arena and Rotary Park Pavilion will also expire within this window. At the conclusion of these contracts and agreements, the sale of bottled water will be prohibited at all existing and future planned Town facilities. Staff will make every effort to encourage our vendors to adopt the Towns' position at the earliest possible date.

Beginning immediately, Town operated concessions will provide notice to our customers that by September 2009 bottled water will no longer be sold. Throughout the summer months, BPA free reusable water containers will be available for purchase at Town concessions.

The public education campaign "Tap into it!" (Appendix C) will be launched during the 2009 Canada Day event and will include the following tactics:

- Information leaflets
- Reusable water containers
- Signage
- Story boards
- Public communication documents and media releases

The public education plan will be developed in cooperation with Corporate Communications. The plan will provide residents with an understanding of the Towns' position, the impact bottled water has on our local environment, and will promote the safety of municipal tap water. Longer term options may include the investigation of waterfront story boards outlining the impact of litter and plastics entering our waterways and provisions for increased access to municipal tap water and recycling opportunities at parks, facilities and events. The objective of the overall plan is to help inform individual behaviour through the provision of information and alternatives.

In 2010 Town special events will no longer have bottled water for sale. Participants will be encouraged to bring reusable containers and sufficient refill opportunities will be available. To ensure such opportunities are available, six water fountains at the Ajax Community Centre and

four at the McLean Community Centre require bottle filler attachments and fill stations will need to be acquired for event locations including Rotary Park, Greenwood Park, and Sportsplex Park. Water fountains will also be incorporated into the design of new public facilities including the Waterfront East and Greenwood Pavilions.

Financial Implications:

Costs associated with this initiative include \$15,000 in 2009 to launch the public education and communication plan. These funds will enable staff to purchase promotional materials, BPA free reusable water containers, and signage. Existing water fountains will be fitted to include bottle filler attachments, the cost of which can be managed within the 2009 approved operating budget.

The 2010 budget submission will include the provision for additional water fountain retrofits required and the installation of new water fountains where appropriate. The loss of revenue associated with this initiative in terms of concession and vending sales will be addressed in the 2010 budget submission by considering alternate revenue sources wherever possible.

Communication Issues:

Upon Council approval, staff will notify user groups, vendors and concession operators of the Towns' position. The public education campaign will be finalized and launched on July 1, 2009 at the Canada Day celebrations. At the earliest opportunity staff will update Town Advisory Committees as to the status of this initiative.

Conclusion:

The decision to phase out the sale of bottled water is the correct and responsible one. Municipal water supply is a heavily regulated and inspected entity and in such, we are fortunate to have access to safe and healthy tap water in Durham Region.

The key to success is an effective public education campaign that details the significant environmental impact caused as a result of the extraction, packaging and distribution of bottled water as well as litter entering our water ways and waste streams. Residents will be encouraged to adopt the principle and philosophy of choosing tap water over bottled water. Provisions for access to municipal water and encouraging the use of reusable containers will support this campaign.

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MEMBER COMMUNICATION

FYI N°: 09-002

To the attention of the Clerk and Council
February 3, 2009

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
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Municipal Action on Bottled Water

Issue: Municipalities across Canada and in Ontario have recently taken action to encourage use of municipal tap water at municipal events and facilities.

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.

Action:

Councils interested in investigating this issue are encouraged to contact those municipalities that have taken action.

This information is available in the Policy Issues section of the AMO website at www.amo.on.ca.



Appendix B

News Release 03/07/2009

Communiqué

THE FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES ENCOURAGES REDUCED BOTTLED WATER USE AT MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

Resolution urging tap water over bottled water where appropriate at municipal facilities passed at FCM's national board meeting

VICTORIA, March 7, 2009 – Canada's national municipal organization is encouraging local governments to reduce the use of bottled water in their own facilities where other options are available.

Meeting today in Victoria, B.C., the National Board of Directors of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) passed a resolution encouraging municipalities to "phase out the sale and purchase of bottled water at their own facilities where appropriate and where potable water is available."

"Today's action is another illustration of how municipalities are leading by example to encourage environmentally sustainable water choices," said FCM president Jean Perrault, mayor of Sherbrooke, Que.

The resolution does not call for a ban on the sale of bottled water to consumers. "Regulating bottled water for public consumption falls under provincial and federal jurisdiction," said Perrault. "All orders of government must work together to reduce reliance on a product that produces more waste, costs more and uses more energy than simple, dependable municipal tap water."

"This cooperation among governments must extend to investments in local water systems. The most economical and reliable source of drinking water is a first-rate municipal water system. Where these systems are lacking, all orders of government must help fund the necessary infrastructure."

FCM's resolution also calls on municipalities to develop awareness campaigns about the positive benefits and quality of municipal water supplies. Municipalities will determine their local course of action.

The resolution was put forward by the cities of Toronto and London, Ont., over growing concerns for environmental impacts related to the production of bottled water, the energy requirements for the production and transport of bottled water, as well as the disposal and/or recycling of water bottles.

Bottled water containers may be recyclable but they still have to be manufactured and transported, which uses significant energy. Between 40 and 80 per cent end up in the local landfill. That is a burden on the environment and a cost for municipal taxpayers.

About the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM):

FCM is the national voice of municipal governments, established in 1901, representing the interests of municipalities on policy and program matters that fall within federal jurisdiction. With more than 1,775 members representing 90 per cent of Canadians, FCM members include Canada's largest cities, small urban and rural communities, and 18 provincial and territorial municipal associations.

For further information or to arrange interviews, contact Wendy Cumming: (613) 907-6356
/ wcumming@fcm.ca

FCM RESOLUTION – NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – MARCH 7, 2009

**ENV09.1.02
BOTTLED WATER**

WHEREAS bottled water consumes significant amounts of non-renewable fossil fuels to extract, package and transport water creating unnecessary air quality and climate change impacts;

WHEREAS it takes about three litres of water to manufacture a one litre plastic bottle of water;

WHEREAS bottled water companies use municipal water and groundwater sources when a growing percentage of Canadian municipalities have faced water shortages in recent years;

WHEREAS although bottled water creates a container that can be recycled, between 40% and 80% of empty bottles end up as litter and/or are placed directly into the garbage and take up unnecessary space in landfills;

WHEREAS tap water is safe, healthy, highly regulated and accessible to residents, employers, employees and visitors to Canadian municipalities and substantially more sustainable than bottled water; and

WHEREAS some municipalities have enacted by-laws to restrict the sale and purchase of water bottles within their own operations;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities urge all municipalities to phase out the sale and purchase of bottled water at their own facilities where appropriate and where potable water is available; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that municipalities be urged to develop awareness campaigns about the positive benefits and quality of municipal water supplies.

City of London and City of Toronto, Ontario

