

# *City of San José, California*

## **COUNCIL POLICY**

<b>TITLE</b> PROHIBITION OF CITY FUNDING FOR PURCHASE OF SINGLE-SERVING BOTTLED WATER	<b>PAGE</b> 1 of 2	<b>POLICY NUMBER</b> 1-19
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b> June 17, 2008	<b>REVISED DATE</b>	
<b>APPROVED BY COUNCIL ACTION</b>	6/17/2008, Item 7.4, Res. No. 74444	

### **BACKGROUND**

Consumption of bottled water has grown dramatically in the last few years. Americans bought 38 billion plastic water bottles (filled with more than 8.25 billion gallons of water) in 2006, a 9.5% increase from the year before. Production of bottled water is very resource intensive and has worldwide impacts. Supplying Americans with plastic water bottles for one year consumes more than 47 million gallons of oil, enough to take 100,000 cars off the road and 1 billion pounds of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere, according to the Container Recycling Institute. The bottling process uses more than 1.5 million barrels of petroleum and 75 billion gallons of water annually (it takes approximately 9 gallons of water to bottle one gallon). In addition, after the water is bottled, it is shipped around the world. Three of the largest exporters to the U.S. are Fiji, France and Italy. Finally, over 75 percent of the single-serve bottles are discarded, adding almost 2 billion pounds of plastic to landfills across the country. The bulk of the bottles that are recycled are shipped to China for processing.

Cities and water districts across the country, funded by ratepayers and state and federal governments, are spending billions of dollars to provide safe, clean drinking water from the tap. Locally, the Santa Clara Valley Water District and the three water retailers within City limits spent approximately \$411 million last year to provide clean safe potable water. Unfortunately, the migration from tap to bottled water fosters a perception that tap water isn't safe or necessary. In truth, tap water quality standards are much more stringent than those for bottled water and the cost of bottled water ranges from 240 to over 10,000 times more expensive, depending on the brand of bottled water.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to reduce the purchase of single-serving bottled water by generally prohibiting the use of City funds for such purposes, with limited exceptions, to demonstrate the City's commitment to environmental, economic, and social stewardship. The City of San José is a leader in the area of environmentally preferable procurement and, through its actions, elicits changes in the marketplace. In eliminating the purchase of single-serving bottled water, a product that creates significant environmental impacts throughout its product life cycle, where ample potable water supply of high quality is available, the City demonstrates its commitment to environmental stewardship, its confidence in California's extensive water supply sources and infrastructure, and prudent fiscal policy.

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**POLICY**

1. It is the Policy of the City of San José that public funds should not be used for the purchase of single-serving bottled water.
2. The following circumstances shall constitute exceptions to the Policy:
  - Public safety emergencies, investigations, and extended deployments or activation of the Office of Emergency Services;
  - High risk of cross-contamination with non-potable water such as at the Water Pollution Control Plant; or
  - Situations where there are no reasonable alternatives to bottled water, such as large public events and when large quantities of water may need to be distributed for health and safety reasons.
3. The City Manager shall promulgate an administrative policy implementing the procedural elements of the Policy and report annually to the Council on the accomplishment of the Policy's goals.
4. City contracts and grant agreements requiring the expenditure of City funds shall contain obligations to follow this Policy.
5. The City Administration shall encourage City employees to engage in environmentally responsible practices, such as using and maintaining reusable containers for their personal consumption of water.
6. This Policy is not intended to preclude employee-funded water "clubs" or any bottled water purchased from any source by an individual or company using private funds.