



City & County of San Francisco  
Executive Directive 07-07

# Permanent Phase-Out of Bottled Water Purchases

By San Francisco City and County  
Government, June 21, 2007

San Francisco is proud of its historic role as an urban leader in environmental protection. For decades, our local government has provided environmental stewardship of the surrounding region's water delivery system. This water delivery system consistently provides among the purest, safest drinking water in the nation from spring snow melt stored in the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir and flowing down the Tuolumne River.

Over the last decade, San Franciscans have responded to marketing campaigns to purchase bottled water and record amounts of bottled water have been purchased by San Francisco consumers and local government at the expense of the environment. Such marketing has suggested that bottled water is safer than better-regulated, pristine tap water delivered by San Francisco government to its residents. As the city advances its Local Climate Action Plan to combat global warming, it is paramount that we initiate policies that limit the most significant contributors to climate change.

The rise of the bottled water industry is well documented and visible throughout San Francisco and the entire world. The global consumption of bottled water was measured at 41 billion gallons in 2004, up 57 percent from the previous five years. This consumption increase occurred despite the fact that bottled water often costs 240 to 10,000 times more than tap water. In San Francisco, for the price of one gallon of bottled water, local residents can purchase 1000 gallons of tap water.

Data suggests that the environmental impact of the bottled water industry

has been profound. According to the Container Recycling Institute, supplying the plastic water bottles that American consumers purchase in one year requires more than 47 million gallons of oil, the equivalent of one billion pounds of carbon dioxide that is released into the atmosphere. More than one billion plastic water bottles end up in California's landfills each year, taking 1000 years to biodegrade and leaking toxic additives such as phthalates into the groundwater and. Additionally, water diverted from local aquifers for the bottled water industry can strain surrounding ecosystems. Furthermore, transporting bottled water by boat, truck and train involves burning massive quantities of fossil fuels. All of this waste and pollution is generated by a product that by objective standards is often inferior to the quality of San Francisco's pristine tap water.

By virtue of the power and authority vested in me by Section 3.100 of the San Francisco Charter to provide administration and oversight of all departments and governmental units in the Executive Branch of the City and County of San Francisco. I hereby issue this Executive Directive to become effective immediately:

- Beginning July 1, 2007, there will be a prohibition from any city department or agency purchasing single serving bottles of water using city funds, unless an employee contract specifies

usage. This prohibition will apply to city contractors and city funded and/or sponsored events. There will be no waivers from this prohibition.

- By September 30, 2007, all city departments and agencies occupying either city or rental properties will have completed an audit to determine the viability of switching from bottled water dispensers to bottle-less water dispensers that utilize Hetch Hetchy supplied water. City departments will work with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SEFUC), Department of Real Estate (DRE) and the City Purchaser to conduct the audit. Staff from the SFUC will contact you shortly to begin the audit for your department.

- By December 1, 2007 all city departments and agencies occupying either city or rental properties will have installed bottle-less water dispensers that utilize Hetch Hetchy supplied water. Waivers will only be granted by the SEFUC based on legitimate engineering, health and fiscal concerns.

For questions concerning this Executive Directive and its implementation, please contact Laura Spanjian, Deputy General Manager of the San Francisco Public Utilities (415-554-1540, LSpanjian@sfgwater.org)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gavin Newsom".

Gavin Newsom  
Mayor

1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 200,  
San Francisco, California 94102-4641;  
gavin.newsom@sfgov.org; (415) 554-6141.