

Bottle Water: Environmental Disaster or Legitimate Consumer Choice?

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Under Attack

- 1999 NRDC “Study”-- *Bottled Water: Pure Drink or Pure Hype?*
- One headline in the UK reads even reads “Bottled Water Lethal to Earth .”
- If you buy fancy brands because you think they taste better, you're probably just buying the hype.” ~ John Stossel 20/20 in 2005.
- Pen and Teller: Uses Eric Olson of the NRDC as their “expert” in a piece trashing bottled water.

Mayors Resolution June 2008

“The US Conference of Mayors encourages cities to phase out, where feasible, government use of bottled water and promote the importance of municipal water.”

Anti-Bottled Water Claims

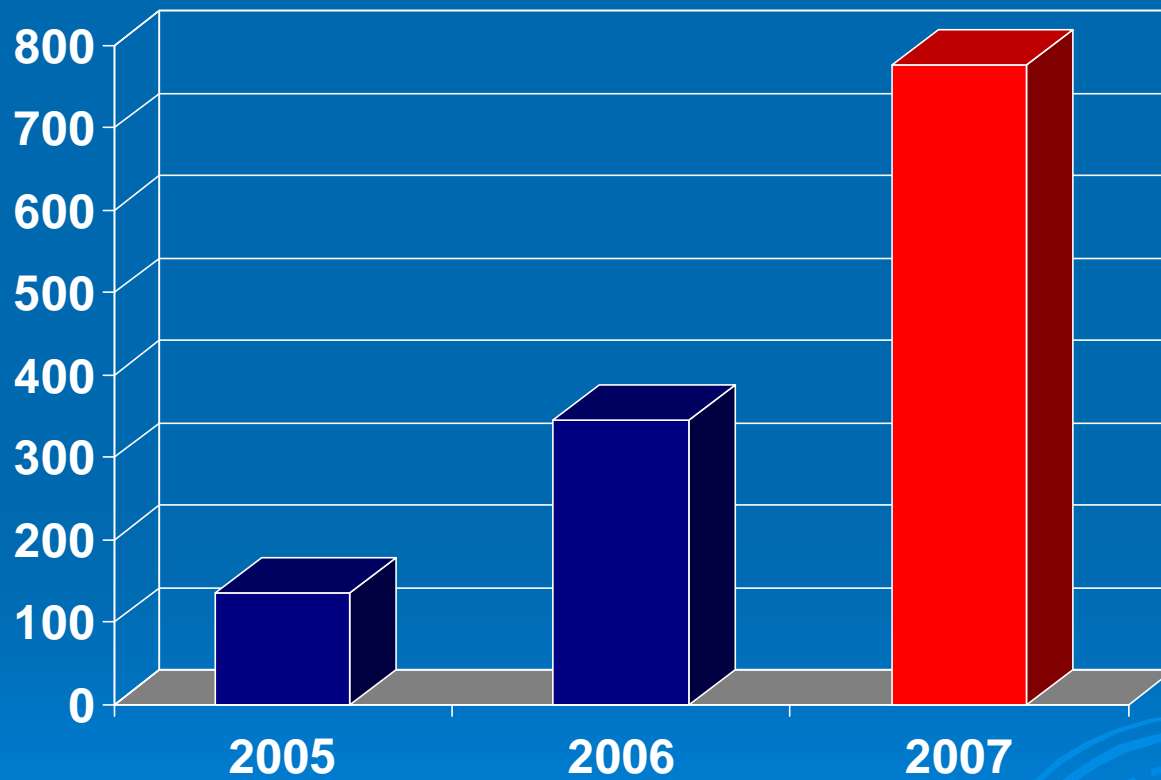
- Creates too much needless waste for landfills;
- Uses too much energy;
- Contributes to global warming; and
- Tap water is the same, but costs less and requires fewer resources to produce and transport.

A Major Challenge

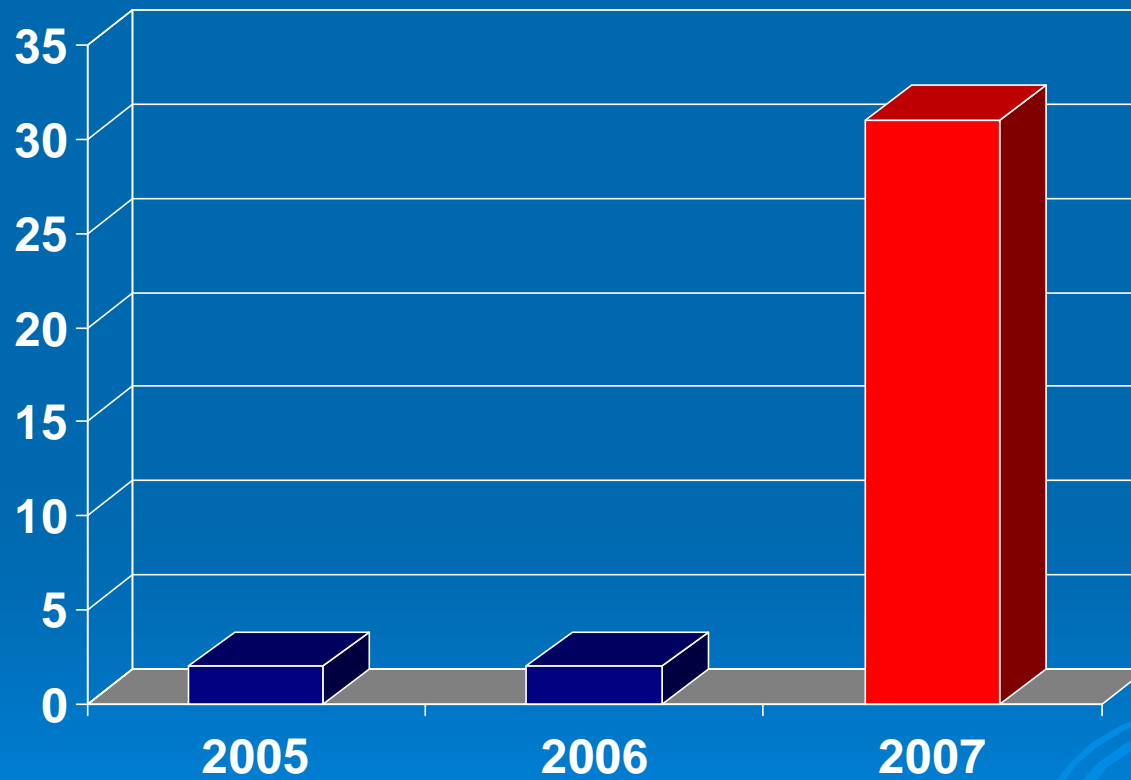
Nielson reports that online discussions of environmental issues increased 169 percent in 2007 from the prior year because of Al Gore.

But similar online content for bottled water increased 520 percent, with the predominant message compelling “consumers to explore safety and environmental hazards, and consider alternatives.”

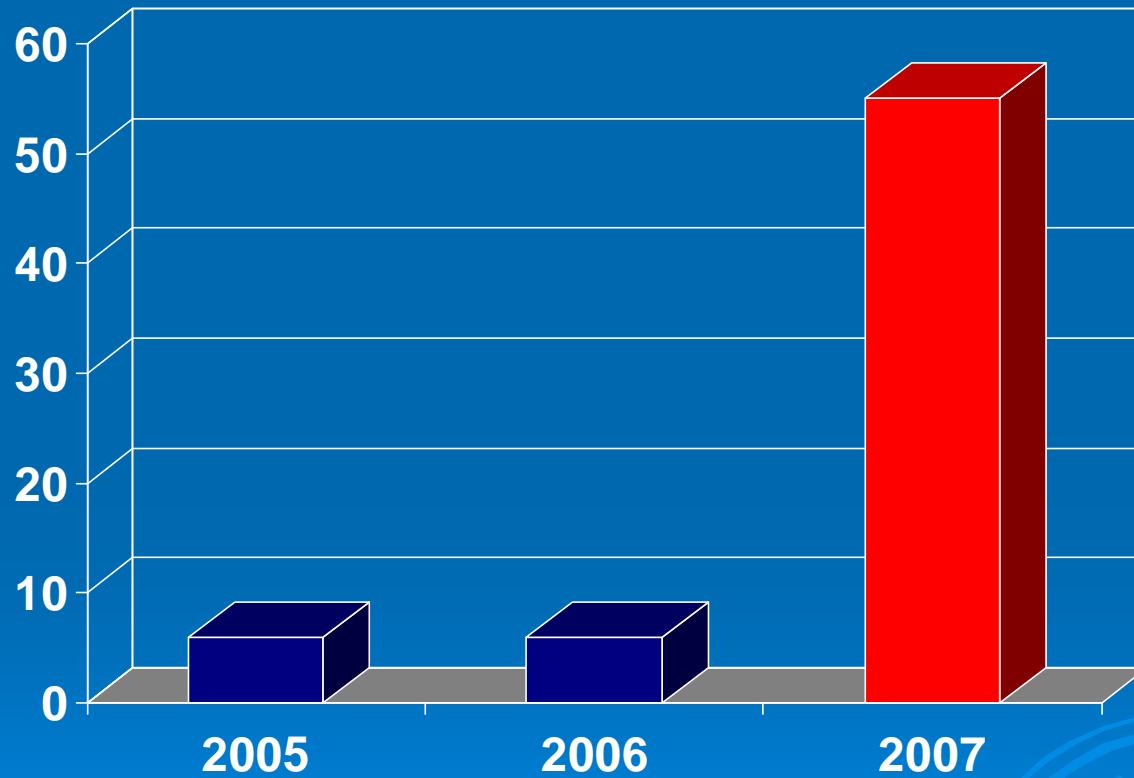
Westlaw Search: “bottled water and global warming”



Westlaw Search: “bottled water ban”



Westlaw Search “bottled water tax”



Mayors Attack:

Bans, taxes, other anti-bottled water policies

- Bans of City purchases: Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, Santa Barbara, San Francisco, Ann Arbor, Santa Fe, Vancouver (WA), Frederick (MD), Davis (CA), Santa Clara (CA), Illinois (state agencies), Cook County (IL), Miami, Jackson County (MO), Pleasanton (CA), and likely more.
- Taxes: Chicago, and more on the horizon.
- Cities funding anti-bottled water campaigns: New York City spending \$700 million.

Chicago Bottled Water Tax

- Chicago levied a 5¢ tax each bottle
- Typical case of 24 bottles costing about \$3.99, the tax comes to about 30 percent.
- The tax is bringing in about half of what the city projected .
- City businesses are losing money as people go to suburbs to shop.

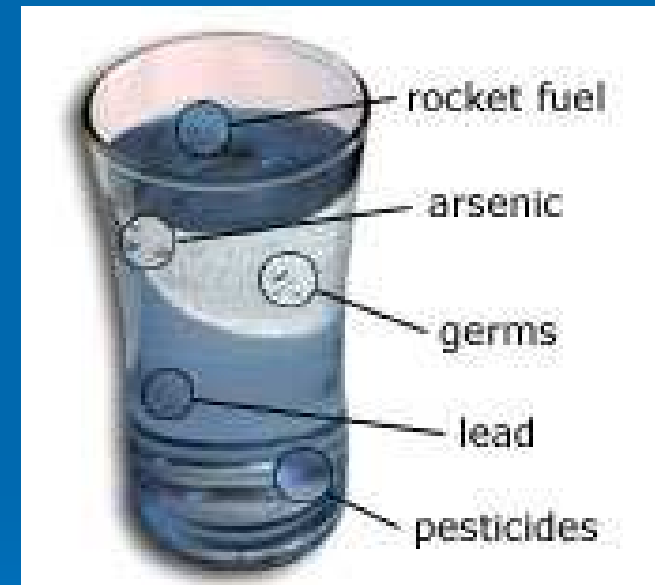
Salt Lake City

No Bottled Water Allowed in city offices

- Banned bottled water for city workers—including Firefighters !
- Each firefighter receives a refillable container.
- Two additional personnel will be dispatched to each fire to refill on the scene
- Firefighters will have to queue up for a drink when their bottle gets low .

Green Scare Campaigns

- Ironically, green hype is one reason people chose bottled water.
- NRDC, EWG: barrage of studies about unsafe tap water.



Now Greens Say Bottled is Bad!

“If people really understood what was behind the manufacture of those plastic bottles, they would think twice.”

~ Allen Herskowitz of the Natural Resources Defense Council recently said July 8 on ABC World News Sunday.

Faulty Claim #1: Bottled Water is the Same as Tap.

- FDA Regulates kinds of water provided and bottles are labeled as:
 - Artesian Water: Water from a well/aquifer.
 - Mineral Water: Contains minerals from the underground water source.
 - Purified Water: Water that has undergone purification, can be purified tap water.
 - Sparkling Bottled Water: Carbonated
 - Spring Water: Water from an underground spring.

Faulty Claim #2: Bottle Water Regulation is Weak.

- EPA regulates tap; FDA regulates bottled.
- FDA standards are nearly exactly same as EPA Safe Drinking Water Act Standards; only vary where tap water regulations are not applicable.
- FDA also applies additional regulations because bottled water is regulated as a food product.

Faulty Claim #3:

Bottled Water Requires too Much Energy.

- All products in commerce require energy to transport!
- Plastic containers are very energy efficient compared to glass, aluminum or steel.
- Plastic bottles are 47 percent more energy efficient than aluminum cans and 63 percent more energy efficient glass bottles.

Faulty Claim #4:

Plastic Bottles Contribute to the Landfill Crisis.

- Less than one percent of landfill waste.
- They don't degrade; but nothing does.
- Plenty landfill space: One large landfill 44 miles by 44 miles could manage 1,000 years of our waste.
- Landfill risks--1 in a billion; Risk of getting cancer from 40 tablespoons of peanut butter--1 in a million.

Faulty Claim #5:

Bottled Water Contributes to Global Warming.

- If claims about human impacts on climate are correct, even drastic changes in the global economy would make little difference.
- Even the Kyoto Protocol wouldn't change things.
- Bottled water impact on global warming is inconsequential.

Faulty Claim #6:

Plastics will make us sick; endocrine disrupters.

- Studied exhaustively; FDA, EPA can find no evidence of any problems.
- Trace Exposures too low: dose that make the poison.
- Compared to naturally occurring chemicals, synthetics are thousands of time lower and less dangerous.
- BPA: Risk is equivalent to that from a tablespoon of soymilk.

Green Alternatives

Less than Perfect

- Refillable containers: easily build up bacteria, raises questions about “safer” claims.
- Water fountains: one study shows that toilets are cleaner than water fountains.
- Filters: CDC warns that they don’t always work, and poor maintenance can make them fail as well.

Why Care?

- Consumer freedom at risk: first bottled water, what next?
- Bottled water offers convenient, portable solution.
- Needed for emergencies
- We don't need more taxes or regulation

“A ban solves nothing, tries to solve the wrong problem, helps reverse a healthy consumer trend, is anti-competitive, creates a legislative nightmare and strikes at the heart of consumer freedom ... Dissuading anyone from drinking pure, calorie-free water is total insanity and a retrograde step. Health and wellness is one of the key drivers of consumption, not 'chic'.”

James R Amoroso, Letter of the Week/Bottled Water Ban: Sheer Nonsense, *Grocer*, August 4, 2007, 20.

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