

Episcopal Ecological Network



(EpEN)

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This paper prepared for the EpEN by Jennifer Snow, Diocese of Chicago July 1, 2009

Resolution A045: Restricting Use of Bottled Water

Talking Points

Why should the church take steps to reduce the use of bottled water?

The church can offer a witness and example, both to its own members and to society at large, by refusing to buy and use bottled water.

Using bottled water has negative environmental, economic, and social justice impacts.

Environmental impacts:

- ☛ Toxic chemicals produced in making the plastic bottles, such as suspected cancer-causing agent bisphenol A, can leach into the water, something which increases with heat and age of the bottle¹
- ☛ Incredible amounts of waste - in 2006, 900,000 tons of plastic for 8 million bottles of water - are created by the bottled water industry; 85 % of this plastic ends up in landfills or floating in the ocean^{1,2}
- ☛ Bottled water is transported by truck and train rather than pipes, leading to increased carbon footprint and greenhouse gases¹

Economic impacts:

- ☛ Makes water far more expensive - in terms of price per ounce of liquid, more expensive than gasoline.²
- ☛ Bottled water is 500 to 4,000 times the price of tap water, although tap water is equal or better in quality in the United States^{1,2}

Social justice impacts:

- ☛ Bottled water encourages the privatization of water, a dangerous trend in a world where water is becoming more scarce¹
- ☛ Providing drinkable water to all people, one of the Millennium Development Goals, is not possible if water becomes a valuable commodity, something to make money from¹
- ☛ When people drink bottled water, they no longer pay attention to caring for and paying for drinkable tap water sources, which the poor must depend upon¹

As the Episcopal Church is committed to living out our Christian responsibilities in caring for the environment and for the poor, we believe that the Church is called to take this action, which is both Christian witness and practical change.

1-Sierra Club, "Bottled Water: Taking Action" brochure

2-<http://lighterfootstep.com/2008/05/five-reasons-not-to-drink-bottled-water/>