

Inside the Bottle

THE PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN ON THE BOTTLED WATER INDUSTRY

www.insidethebottle.org
THE POLARIS INSTITUTE

Community Organizing Package

Ideas and Tools for a Campaign Challenging the Bottled Water Industry

www.insidethebottle.org
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Forming a water committee in your community



Ideas:

- **Identify a Chair for the first meeting.** The role of the Chair, which can be more than one individual, is to take the lead on the following tasks for the first meeting...
- **Pick a date a time for the meeting.** Generally speaking, one hour is a good length for a first meeting, week nights tend to be more available for people than weekends
- **Get the word out.** Create a *poster* (date, time, location, catchy graphic or phrase) and post in nearby community centres, coffee shops and public places. Write a short description of the meeting and *email* it out to friends/family/colleagues
- **Find allies.** Research local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community and church groups with an environmental and social justice focuses and invite them to share the email announcement with their members and send a representative to the meeting
- **Invite union locals.** Research whether your community has a Canadian Union of Public Worker's (CUPE) local that represents City water and waste department employees, if so invite them to share the announcement and send a representative. These locals have a direct interest maintaining water services as safe, accessible and public and reducing the amounts of plastic waste overfilling City run landfills; all of which the bottled water trend challenges
- **Create an agenda for the first meeting.** Consider including a brief overview of the bottled water industry for those who may attend that are not familiar with the issues. Allow time for a preliminary discussion of a name for the group, developing a meeting schedule (bi-monthly, monthly?), and time for initial planning for campaigning action



Tools:

- Order a copy of '*Inside the Bottle: Exposing the Bottled Water Industry*,' a thorough account of the bottled water industry by Tony Clarke, to help with your overview of the bottled water industry: <http://policyalternatives.ca/Reports/2007/07/InsideTheBottle/>
- Download and print copies of Polaris' 'Ever Wonder What Else is Inside the Bottle' brochures (find at www.insidethebottle.org , sidebar, 'campaign tools' which summarize the arguments against the bottled water industry or order a package of 100 professionally printed brochures by emailing: insidethebottle@insidethebottle.org
- www.insidethebottle.org has up to date news on the bottled water industry and the growing resistance to it. The campaigns section of the website is frequently updated with action letters and petitions that can be used in local campaigns and the campaign activities and tools sidebars post upcoming meetings and events and useful campaign resources



Banning bottled water



Getting various organizations (such as unions and school boards), businesses and groups in your community to stop purchasing and distributing bottled water is a great way to get the message out about the bottled water industry in a proactive way. Here are some **Ideas** on how to develop this into a campaign:

- **Prepare a short presentation on the bottled water industry.** This presentation can be used at meetings and gatherings to convince people why they should stop using or selling bottled water at meetings, within their buildings, at their business, etc.
- **Prepare a generic press release.** Having a press release announcing the banning of bottled water available when this decision is made helps you get the word out quickly to local press and your community about this progressive decision. If you need assistance, or are unsure of how to write a press release, email andi@polarisinstitute.org
- **Consider forming a coalition.** Strength in numbers is a saying that remains true. Seek out allies with a shared interest in seeing the resolution to ban bottled water used on a wider scale. Here again, consider contacting local NGOs, church and community groups with an environmental and/or social justice focus, and CUPE locals representing City water and waste departments
- **Schedule a time.** Contact the target audience about setting aside a time to make a presentation about the bottled water industry featuring the resolution to ban bottled water (refer to tools)
- **Presenting your argument.** Present your arguments against the bottled water industry and reasons for supporting tap water; consider providing examples of others taking similar steps in banning bottled water. For articles about campus groups, school districts, municipalities, Cities and restaurants banning bottled water, refer to www.insidethebottle.org
- **Get the message out!** Send the press release to local media sources, articles in local media with a contact point for your group can further expose the group to the community and boost numbers at group meetings and events. Make sure to also send a press release to insidethebottle@insidethebottle.org in order to make sure the news is featured on www.insidethebottle.org
- Start over!



Tools:

- Find a copy of a sample resolution to ban bottled water that your group can use at: www.insidethebottle.org , side bar, 'campaign tools'
- Refer to www.insidethebottle.org for updated information on the bottled water industry and the growing resistance to it
- Order a copy of *'Inside the Bottle: Exposing the Bottled Water Industry,'* a thorough account of the bottled water industry by Tony Clarke to help prepare your presentation: <http://policyalternatives.ca/Reports/2007/07/InsideTheBottle/>
- Download and print copies of Polaris' 'Ever Wonder What Else is Inside the Bottle' brochures (find at www.insidethebottle.org , sidebar, 'campaign tools' which summarize the arguments against the bottled water industry or order a package of 100 professionally printed brochures by emailing: insidethebottle@insidethebottle.org



Support public water



Convincing your local government, such as city, county and district councils and regions, to stop purchasing and distributing bottled water in City-owned spaces, at meetings and official functions is a great way to set a precedent in your community about supporting public water services. It also sends a message about the environmental, health, social and economic impacts of choosing to drink bottled water instead of tap water. Here are some **Ideas** on how to develop this into a campaign:

- **Decide on your message.** Do you want to stop the purchasing and distribution bottled water in certain spaces, at meetings and official functions? Should the ban also apply to City agencies, contractors, vending machines and City sponsored indoor and outdoor events? What specifically do you think should be banned, single serve bottles as well as water coolers? Do you think this message should be connected with a call for more public water fountains and an awareness campaign about the environmental, health, social and economic impacts of the bottled water industry that encourages the use of public tap water?
- **Prepare a presentation outlining your position.** Although you may understand why consuming bottled water is not a sound environmental, health, social or economic choice, others may not. Prepare a presentation that clearly makes these arguments that can be used to convince your City Council that they should adopt a resolution in support of the message to stop using bottled water. In preparing this resolution refer to the tools listed below, and feel free to contact insidethebottle@insidethebottle.org with questions
- **Consider forming a coalition.** Strength in numbers is a saying that remains true. Seek out allies with a shared interest in seeing City Council stop supporting the bottled water industry. Here again, consider contacting local NGOs, church and community groups with an environmental and/or social justice focus, and CUPE locals representing City water and waste departments
- **Seek support within your local government for your message.** Identify some City Councillors or council members that are likely to support your group's message about bottled water. Send them the presentation, perhaps they have suggestions on how to move forward or ways they can support the initiative
- **Prepare a press release.** Prepare a press release announcing the steps being taken by your local government to stop using bottled water and support public water services. If you are unsure of how to write a press release, or would like help, email andi@polarisinstitute.org
- **Research what particular council or committee your group should contact first.** If the target is a City Council, research whether the City has an Environmental Committee (title may differ), if there is one, get in touch with the clerk (contact information can be found on City websites). Inquire as to the best way to bring this issue to the committee's attention. If you are presenting committee, research who will need to be contacted in order to schedule a time to present your arguments and demands. Some questions to considering asking include; should the group begin with a formal letter or start collecting signatures of community members that support this cause before making the



presentation? Offer to draft a resolution (the prototype resolution can be used) for consideration

- **Make your case.** Request the opportunity to speak to this resolution at a meeting
- **Generating community support.** If not already started, consider collecting signatures in your community for a petition listing some facts and the specific demands being made. This can then be delivered to the committee or council reviewing the proposal before the stated timeframe for deciding on the resolution. Consider running a ‘call-in’ campaign action in which residents call their City Councillors or committee members expressing their support for the resolution
- **Get the message out!** Send the press release to local media sources. Articles in local media with a contact point for your group can further expose the group to the community and boost numbers at group meetings and events. Make sure to also send a press release to insidethebottle@insidethebottle.org in order to make sure the news is featured on www.insidethebottle.org
- **Follow up work to get the message out further.** Find out whether there are ways to work with local government representatives in the aftermath of this decision. For example, are there ways the group can support an awareness campaign on bottled water promoting the use of tap water?



Tools:

- Find a sample resolution to ban bottled water at: www.insidethebottle.org side bar, ‘campaign tools.’ Add some facts (such as recycling and waste statistics) that relate to your community and address the resolution to your target audience
- Use the Executive-Directive issued by the Office of the Mayor of San Francisco prohibiting city departments and agencies from purchasing bottled water as a supporting example. Download at: www.insidethebottle.org side bar, ‘campaign tools’
- Download a letter Polaris Institute sent to 28 Mayors across Canada after the San Francisco Executive-Directive was passed to encourage them to critically examine their municipality’s expenditures on bottled water, at: www.insidethebottle.org/community-labor-action side bar, ‘campaign tools.’ This letter can also be sent by Polaris Institute in support of your campaign on request
- Order a copy of ‘*Inside the Bottle: Exposing the Bottled Water Industry*,’ a thorough account of the bottled water industry by Tony Clarke to help prepare your presentation: <http://policyalternatives.ca/Reports/2007/07/InsideTheBottle/>
- Download and print copies of Polaris’ ‘Ever Wonder What Else is Inside the Bottle’ brochures (find at www.insidethebottle.org , sidebar, ‘campaign tools’ which summarize the arguments against the bottled water industry or order a package of 100 professionally printed brochures by emailing: insidethebottle@insidethebottle.org



Right to know



Do you know whether there is a bottling facility in your community? Is ground water or municipal tap water being used? Can you find out how much water is being used? Here are some **Ideas** on how to develop a water takings right to know campaign:

If you have a local bottling plant in your community:

- **Mapping the industry.** Refer to Polaris' 'mapping the industry' link on www.insidethebottle.org to find out whether there is a bottling plant in your community. If you know of a plant that is not listed on the website, join in our collective research and send new information to mapping@polarisinstitute.org
- **Making a formal request.** Legislation regarding ground water source takings differs from province to province. If there is a bottling facility in your community using ground water sources, try contacting a local conservation authority, municipality or your province's ministry of the environment with a formal request to access information on their water takings (such as how much water is being taken on a daily basis, what limits there are, when they will be seeking a permit renewal and how much the bottling facility has to pay in permits or fees to take the water). Make sure to also send this request to the bottling facility. If the bottling facility is using municipal tap water sources, make a formal request to the bottling facility and your City, county or region's water department requesting access to how much water is being used each day, how much they pay for the water they take and how their bottling plants process and test water quality, per day.

If this information is released to your group, consider:

- ❖ Contacting local environmental groups and Polaris Institute with the information so they can help in understanding the environmental impacts of this water taking
- ❖ In the case of municipal tap water being used, consider contacting your union local that represents water department employees and discuss whether a campaign can be developed around water as a public good and the need to raise awareness of the problems associated with commodifying and privatizing water
- ❖ Contact a local environmental reporter about these numbers and the concerns they raise and the difficulties in accessing this information

If this information is denied, consider:

- ❖ Creating a right to know campaign centered on the demand for accessibility, this is information that should rightly be public given that water is a public resource with important environmental and social functions. This could feature actions such as leafleting in your community to raise awareness of the lack of accessibility and the issues that this raises, collecting signatures for a petition demanding accessibility to this information and organizing a public event/media stunt to present signed petitions to the management of the local bottling plant or corporate head-quarters for the bottling plant
- ❖ Consider looking into the process of filing an access to information request with provincial or federal authorities

'Right to know' campaign:



Coca Cola and PepsiCo both refuse to release publicly how much water each of their plants take from the local public water services (both source from municipal tap water) per brand each day, how much they pay for the water they take (per plant) and how their bottling plants process and test water quality.

Consider building a campaign around the water takings petition (find under tools) designed to pressure these bottling companies and their shareholders to take the public's demand for water taking information seriously.

- **Hand out leaflets and collect signatures.** Create a handout describing why it is important to have access to this information that refers people to the online petition (listed under tools)
- **Host a public discussion.** Once you received a substantial amount of signatures, why not plan a public evening discussion. This event hosted by the group (consider seeking co-sponsorship from allied organizations) can feature panelists speaking to the need for stronger regulation of the industry and the inherent problems with bottling water. Invite local Councillors, MPP's and MP's



Tools:

- Sign the online water takings petition: <http://www.insidethebottle.org/coca-cola-water-taking-petition>
- www.insidethebottle.org has up to date news on the bottled water industry and the growing resistance to it. The campaigns section of the website is frequently updated with action letters and petitions that can be used in local campaigns and the campaign activities and tools sidebars post upcoming meetings and events and useful campaign resources
- Order a copy of '*Inside the Bottle: Exposing the Bottled Water Industry*,' a thorough account of the bottled water industry by Tony Clarke to help prepare your presentation: <http://policyalternatives.ca/Reports/2007/07/InsideTheBottle/>
- Download and print copies of Polaris' 'Ever Wonder What Else is Inside the Bottle' brochures (find at www.insidethebottle.org , sidebar, 'campaign tools' which summarize the arguments against the bottled water industry or order a package of 100 professionally printed brochures by emailing: insidethebottle@insidethebottle.org



Demanding a Bottle Bill



Calling on your province to enact a bottle bill (container deposit law) that includes PET plastic beverage containers is an important step in taking action on the environmental damage that plastic water bottles create. It also sends a clear message to the bottled water industry that they need to take responsibility for the environmental mess they are making. Here are some **Ideas** on how to develop this into a campaign:

- **Do some investigative work:** Find out what kind of container deposit laws exist in your province. This information can be found your province's Ministry of the Environment page, the bottle bill resource page: <http://www.bottlebill.org/legislation/canada.htm>, or you can contact us at the Polaris Institute: zoe@polarisinstitute.org
- **Design a petition/open letter:** Here you can include stats on container recycling rates as well as recovery rates for plastic beverage containers: <http://www.solidwastemag.com/PostedDocuments/PDFs/OctNov04/PlasticBottle.pdf>. Your petition can be directed to your provincial Environment Minister and Minister responsible for Public Infrastructure. Collect signatures by sending your petition to family, friends, community/environmental/volunteer organizations, e-mail networks, etc. For a *petition*, you should also find out the particular procedures necessary when petitioning the government.
- **Build support:** Working with other like-minded folks always builds a stronger campaign. Consider contacting local NGOs, church and community groups with an environmental and/or social justice focus, and CUPE locals representing City waste departments. You can also contact your MP and encourage them to support your petition.
- **Go public!** Send a press release to local media stating that your coalition is demanding that the province enact a bottle bill. Have your open letter published in the local paper.



Tools:

- If you live in Ontario, a Bottle Bill campaign is already underway! Check it out and sign the online open letter: <http://www.insidethebottle.org/demand-ontario-bottle-bill>. You can use the Ontario Bottle Bill Open Letter as a blueprint for your province.
- www.insidethebottle.org has up to date news on the bottled water industry and the growing resistance to it. The campaigns section of the website is frequently updated with action letters and petitions that can be used in local campaigns and the campaign activities and tools sidebars post upcoming meetings and events and useful campaign resources
- Order a copy of 'Inside the Bottle: Exposing the Bottled Water Industry,' a thorough account of the bottled water industry by Tony Clarke for more information on bottled water recycling issues: <http://policyalternatives.ca/Reports/2007/07/InsideTheBottle/>
- Order a package of Polaris' 'Ever Wonder What Else is Inside the Bottle' brochures which summarize the arguments against supporting the bottled water industry that can be distributed to along with your petition/open letter.

Some useful information:

- Bottle Bill Resource Guide: <http://www.bottlebill.org/>
- *An Overview of Plastic Bottle Recycling in Canada*, prepared for Environment and Plastics Industry Council (EPIC): <http://www.solidwastemag.com/PostedDocuments/PDFs/OctNov04/PlasticBottle.pdf>



Taking the pledge



Join the broader movement challenging the bottled water industry by helping to build the numbers of people taking the pledge to stop drinking bottled water. Here are some **Ideas** on how to develop this into a campaign:

- Create a leaflet, or use Polaris Institute's 'Ever Wonder what else is Inside the Bottle' brochure available for order, summarizing some key reasons to stop using bottled water that includes a link to the pledge site (refer to tools)
- Distribute leaflet at meetings, events, with friends, colleagues, family, share with student/environmental/community groups and whoever else is thought will take the pledge!



Tools:

- Find the pledge link at:
<http://www.insidethebottle.org/take-think-outside-bottle-pledge-0>

