



February 2007

The critique of the bottled water industry in the mainstream media continues this month with a number of articles from around the world discussing the environmental and health risks that come with bottled water.

(The stories mentioned are based on news articles listed with hyperlinks in the 'this months bottled water headlines' section further down the page)

More UK calls to 'Ditch bottled water'

In the UK, Sustain's report [Have you bottled it?](#) continues to influence media reports about bottled water. Journalists from as far away as New Zealand are writing stories about the dangers of bottled water and citing the report's findings.

Following on the heels of various UK government ministries banning bottled water, Liverpool City Council announced a plan to ban the use of bottled water in the workplace for nearly 20,000 Town Hall staff. Council staff and politicians will be asked to make the switch for environmental reasons. Liverpool is the 5th largest city in the UK.

The city of Rochdale (UK) council has also proposed a ban on supplying bottled water to staff and councilors.

In a new twist, a private water services company in the UK, [Yorkshire Water](#) (subsidiary of the [Kelda Group](#)), has publicly called on Yorkshire members of parliament to stop using bottled water. It appears that private water services companies are beginning to use the bottled water issue for public relations purposes.

Coke's Swiss Green PR Drive

Coca-Cola CEO Neville Isdell spent part of the past month hob-knobbing with world leaders and other CEOs at the [World Economic Forum](#) in Davos, Switzerland. Isdell, co-chair of this year's meeting, spent much of his time re-branding his company, using the forum to polish Coke's perceived image as a good corporate citizen.

At the top of Isdell's agenda was the water issue. At the meeting's opening press conference, Isdell stated that the company has been reducing its water usage by approximately 4 percent annually in order to 'reduce the footprint'. No proof of this water reduction or details of how this initiative will be implemented was outlined during the news conference.

While Isdell tells the global media that Coke is reducing the amount of water it uses, the reality is that the public has no idea how much water Coca-Cola and its bottlers take to produce its products. In most cases the company is not required to produce statistics about water takings. Isdell's announcement about a reduction in water use is a classic case of a corporation covering up its environmental impacts with public relations. This kind of behaviour is also known as greenwashing.

Isdell used the meetings – with 500 media representatives, 24 heads of state and 800 high level corporate executives in attendance – as a platform to advertise Coke's projects and policies towards issues such as: global warming; workers' rights; and the obesity epidemic. What this kind of presentation amounts to, is a showcase of expensive public relations projects designed to revamp Coca-Cola as an environmentally caring corporate citizen.

Coke bottler sucking water in drought ridden Australia

Facing the worst drought in 100 years, residents of the State of Victoria now have to watch Sunkoshi Ltd. suck millions of litres of water out of the ground for the production of Coca-Cola products. Despite the community's anger, and the extreme drought, the company declared that they would go ahead with the project. (See article below)

This month's bottled water headlines:

[UK] 'Ditch bottled water'

January 5, 2007

Huddersfield Examiner

[New Zealand] Water bottles' risky cocktail

January 7, 2007

New Zealand Herald

[US] Bottled water is cheap to buy, but the environmental cost is high

January 8, 2007

The Idaho Statesman

[Botswana] Summer Boosts Bottled-Water Sales

January 11, 2007

All Africa

[Australia] Anger over licence for bottled water firm

January 12, 2007

The Age

[UK] Giving water that extra special taste

January 12, 2007

The Harrogate Advertiser

[US] Rivers losing water to homes, snowmaking, bottled water

January 14, 2007

Associated Press Newswires

[US] Spin the (water) bottle / With \$11 billion in U.S. sales, the beverage's marketers have become clear winners

January 17, 2007

The San Francisco Chronicle

[UK] Ditch bottled water plea by councillor

January 16, 2007

Western Morning News

[US] How water bottlers tap into all sorts of sources

January 19, 2007

The San Francisco Chronicle

[France] Paris hits back at eau minerale as adverts pour scorn on its water

January 19, 2007

The Times

[US] Groups Battle For Bottled Water; Nestle Wants To Pump Millions Of Gallons; Michigan Residents Are Worried

January 21, 2007

The Post Standard/Herald-Journal

[UK] [Liverpool] Council to ditch bottled water

January 23, 2007

Daily Post

[Switzerland] Coca-Cola CEO: We're working to reduce company's environmental footprint

January 24, 2007

Associated Press Newswires

[Switzerland] Davos: The World Economic Forum: Gathering Gives Chance to Burnish Images - Coke, BP to Show Off Green Side, While More Russians Are Coming to Meeting

January 24, 2007

The Wall Street Journal

[UK] £35,000 cap on bottled water

27 January 2007

Manchester Evening News

[US] Religious groups object to selling of bottled water

27 January 2007

Times Herald

[US] Growing worry about water as a commodity

January 27, 2007

The San Diego Union-Tribune

[UK] Coke to relaunch Malvern mineral water

January 29, 2007

Just-Drinks

[Uganda] Coke Gives Shs1b for Water

January 31, 2007

All Africa

[Thailand] Trusting the taps; Water from the municipal supply is considered unsafe by most Bangkokians, but after investigating the matter, SIRIPORN SACHAMUNEEWONGSE, finds that's a misconception

February 4, 2007

Bangkok Post

[UK] Drive for tap water by MP

07 February 2007

The Evening Chronicle, Newcastle

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