

RESOLUTION: Taking Back the Tap

Whereas, Cornell University has signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment, which pledges “Cornell University to a path toward climate neutrality enhancing our land-grant mission in support of a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable society”; and

Whereas, the Cornell Climate Action Plan, which seeks to “achieve climate neutrality on campus by the year 2050, and provide a model for solutions that will engage, educate, and inspire our state, our nation, and our world,” identifies energy conservation as one of the five recommended action areas and promotes “active leadership” and “campus engagement from faculty, staff, students, and alumni”; and

Whereas, bottled water wastes 2,000 times as much energy as tap water, and 85 percent of bottles are not recycled; and

Whereas, Cornell Dining sold 148,543 total Aquafina single-use water bottles in the latest fiscal year, a decrease of 33,575 units from the previous fiscal year, thus indicating declining consumer demand for bottled water on campus consistent with nationwide trends; and

Whereas, U.S. plastic water bottle production requires approximately 32 to 54 million gallons of oil, and three out of every four of those bottles end up in landfills, as roadside litter, or in an incinerator; and

Whereas, a 20-ounce bottle of water requires about one-third its volume in oil for manufacture, transportation, and disposal; and

Whereas, almost 50% of bottled water comes from the same source as tap water but is sold back to consumers at hundreds of times the cost; and

Whereas, bottled water, regulated by the FDA, is less stringently regulated than municipal tap water, regulated by the EPA; and

Whereas, Fall Creek the source of Cornell’s tap water, consistently exceeds EPA standards; and

Whereas, public tap water is safe and is significantly more affordable, accessible, and environmentally sustainable than bottled water; and

Whereas, bottled water undermines communities’ faith in their public water systems;

Whereas, 68 universities and colleges around the country including Brown University, Harvard University, Dartmouth College, Yale University, University of Pennsylvania, University of California-Berkeley, Belmont University, Oberlin College, New York University, Vassar College, Washington University, Oregon State University, Seattle

University and many others have already made campus-wide efforts to curb their bottled water use; and

Whereas, The Cornell Student Assembly passed a similar resolution on the 4th of November, 2010 demonstrating their support for the following actions.

Be it therefore resolved that the Faculty Senate recommends that President Skorton issue a directive to all departments, facilities and functions discouraging the purchase of bottled water.

Be it further resolved that the Faculty Senate recommends that the University invest in drinking fountain infrastructure by increasing the number of and, where possible, retrofitting drinking fountains on campus with spigots for refilling reusable bottles.

Be it further resolved that the Faculty Senate recommends that the University encourage the use of and, where possible, sell refillable bottles at dining facilities, department offices and functions.

Be it further resolved that the Faculty Senate recommends that the University authorize, endorse, and facilitate efforts to educate, via various media, the university community regarding the value and benefits of using the local water system for all of its water needs.

Be it further resolved that the Faculty Senate recommends that the University will take gradual but concrete steps to end the purchase, sales, and distribution of bottled water on campus and at Cornell-hosted events, which will include:

Gradually replacing bottled water with tap water and/or filtered water whenever possible;

Specifically refusing to sell bottled water through Cornell Dining when future beverage contracts are negotiated; and

Be it finally resolved, that the Faculty Senate recommends that the President's Sustainable Campus Committee (PSCC) include a timeline of specific measures pertaining to decreasing the consumption of bottled water into its "annual progress report on Cornell's campus sustainability initiatives and commitments" as part of the Climate Action Plan.

Resolution Presented By:

Take Back The Tap at Cornell

Kristen Loria '11, President

Organizations Supporting the Resolution:

Cornell Student Assembly (Resolution Passed)

Environmental Law Society

KyotoNow!

Sustainability Hub

Society for Natural Resources Conservation

Roots and Shoots

Cornell Sustainable Design Team

Dilmun Hill

Engineers for a Sustainable World