

# District of North Vancouver won't ban bottled water

## Proposal to limit municipal sale of plastic bottles gets no support

BY TESSA HOLLOWAY, NORTH SHORE NEWS JULY 22, 2011

DISTRICT of North Vancouver council has poured cold water on one councillor's proposal to ban the sale of bottled water in municipal buildings.

Coun. Alan Nixon wrote the motion designed to ban singleserving bottled water sales at district hall, civic events and other district-owned facilities, with the goal of reducing the amount of plastic that winds up in the region's landfills and recycling programs.

Only Nixon voted for his motion July 11, while other councillors argued the district shouldn't get in the way of consumer choice, that tap water facilities like fountains are of poor quality and that bottled water could be helpful in the event of health emergencies or a major disaster.

Some councillors felt banning bottled water would just encourage people to drink pop.

A similar motion was far less controversial in the City of North Vancouver, which banned the sale of bottled water in city buildings in the summer of 2009, along with expanding access to tap water via fountains and carafes.

Both Metro Vancouver and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities have passed resolutions encouraging their members to ban sale of bottled water, and Vancouver, Burnaby, Victoria and Delta have also instituted bans.

Metro Vancouver notes the region's drinking water is regulated and tested more than 25,000 times each year, while bottled water is often just municipal water sold with a 2,000 per cent markup. The Metro resolution also says millions of plastic bottles wind up in the region's landfills.

Nova Scotia became the first province to ban bottled water sales in government buildings in 2010.

Council did express interest in a strategy to improve tap water fountains and facilities, and staff promised to report back on options at a later date.

A second motion from Coun. Nixon asked district council to recognize the "human right to water," promote public ownership and operations of the water supply and lobby the federal government for further funds.

In that motion, Coun. Roger Bassam threw in his support after amending the motion so it wouldn't apply to sewage treatment as it was originally written, but that was also defeated, with other councillors arguing there is a role for private operators in the delivery of public tap water.

As a notice of motion, private involvement in water delivery wouldn't have actually been banned.

The motion was modeled after a similar motion recently passed in Victoria.

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