**Bottled Water**

Government Standards

###### 12.3 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on what the fundamental values and principles of civil society are (i.e., the autonomous sphere of voluntary personal, social, and economic relations that are not part of government), their interdependence, and the meaning and importance of those values and principles for a free society.

1. Explain how civil society provides opportunities for individuals to associate for social, cultural, religious, economic, and political purposes.
2. Explain how civil society makes it possible for people, individually or in association with others, to bring their influence to bear on government in ways other than voting and elections.

###### 12.7 Students analyze and compare the powers and procedures of the national, state, tribal, and local governments.

5. Explain how public policy is formed, including the setting of the public agenda and implementation of it through regulations and executive orders.

**Should the government regulate and encourage the ban of bottled water sales?**

Economics Standards

###### 12.2 Students analyze the elements of America's market economy in a global setting.

###### 12.3 Students analyze the influence of the federal government on the American economy.

**Is bottled water worth the cost?**

Source 1

David Lewis Feldman, *Water,* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2012, pp. 116-117

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| [F]resh water providers—whether they sell and market their product through a publically owned utility or a private, stockholder-owned company—are, in reality, “mixed” enterprises. They obtain their product through government-owned and controlled “wholesale” distribution systems. These systems consist of publically constructed dams and reservoirs, aqueducts, and management agencies including river basin commissions or groundwater management bureaus…  The revolution in freshwater consumerism exemplified by the bottled water phenomenon adds a further wrinkle to the “mixed” nature of freshwater provision, and to the problems of fairness and sustainability. By transforming freshwater into an expensive, resource-intensive product that uses vast amounts of energy and generates hazardous wastes, bottled water is not very environmentally friendly. Its “manufacture” and use, moreover raise equity issues in two ways. First, because bottled water vendors try to acquire exclusive water rights in communities adjacent to the sources of water, they antagonize less powerful groups. Second, overt marketing of bottled water to vulnerable minority groups, sometimes falsely entice to buy their product for fear that tap water is impure or unhealthful, is a form of economic exploitation. I suggest that all three of these challenges; the mixed nature of the water provision business, the equity and sustainability of these businesses’ operations, and the emergence of bottled water as a new form of freshwater consumerism, are forcing us to reconsider the importance of transparency, equity, and stewardship in the geopolitics of freshwater. |

*Dr. David Feldman, a leading expert in water policy and ethics, Professor and Chair of Planning, Policy, and Design in the School of Social Ecology at the University of California, Irvine (UCI) and the Director of UCI’s Water initiative.*

Source 2

David Minkow, “Many Latinos Favor Bottled Water”, February 7, 2003

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| Eileen Navarro refuses to drink the water from her tap. “I don’t trust it,” explains the East Los Angeles mother of three. “It comes through dirty pipes, plus I don’t believe the water is any good to begin with.”  Instead, Navarro and her family drink only bottled water. “The only time I use tap water is to wash my car,” she says.  Navarro’s attitude is not unusual, especially among the state’s Hispanic community. According to a statewide study last year by the Public Policy Institute of California, 55 percent of Latinos drink bottled water, compared to 30 percent of whites. And in Southern California, which has the nation’s highest rates of bottled water consumption, a Metropolitan Water District survey found that 82 percent of Hispanics bought bottled water versus 68 percent of whites.  In response, MWD and the Central Basin Municipal Water District launched a campaign two years ago to educate Latino customers about the quality of tap water.  “They come over from Mexico or other Latin American countries that have water quality problems, so they don’t trust water coming from the tap,” explains Central Basin spokesperson Art Aguilar. “We want them to know that the water in this country is good and that they don’t have to fear it.”  He says that the monthly cost for a family drinking 60 gallons of water is 13 ½ cents for tap water, compared to $15 for water from vending machines and $48 for bottled water. “Our message was, ‘hey, you’ve got limited resources and you don’t have to spend money on bottled water.’”  The campaign included posters, a community health fair and a 30-page pamphlet: “What You’ve Always Wanted to Know About Your Tap Water.” Mothers of East LA executive director Elsa Lopez, one of several volunteers who went door-to-door distributing the pamphlets, wishes that there had been more outreach money. She encountered many people who had been told that drinking tap water would make them sick and cause their teeth to rot.  “People with no scruples are pushing folks to buy filtration systems, even though it is so expensive and unnecessary. They prey upon recent immigrants who already think that tap water is bad.”  In 1999, two water filtration companies were accused of using deceptive business practices in Southern California to charge exorbitant fees to Latino residents for water filter systems. Authorities found that after being shown misleading water tests and told that tap water contained feces and urine, caused cancer and had killed children, thousands of Latino residents had signed English-language contracts to pay thousands of dollars for water filters that only cost a few hundred dollars at home improvement stores.  Mel Suffet, professor of environmental health sciences at UCLA, says that most popular concerns about tap water are unfounded. “Tap water is as safe as bottled water—in some cases it may be a safer product.”  He explains that some bottled water is made by simply removing chlorine from tap water and then using ozonation to disinfect it. “If it doesn’t say spring water or doesn’t have information about its source, it probably means that it is reprocessed tap water,” he says.  In October, the Natural Resources Defense Council published a report, “What’s on Tap,” that evaluated the drinking water in 19 cities, including Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego and Fresno. It concluded that while the purity of drinking water has improved over the past 15 years, contaminants in the water can be a health risk for certain populations.  “For people with compromised immune systems, it may be safer, after consulting with their doctors about the quality of their local tap water, to drink bottled water,” recommends NRDC attorney Adrianna Quintero.  But she says that before choosing to forego tap water, consumers need to know what’s in the alternatives. In addition to concerns that bottled water doesn’t differ from what is in the tap, she says, “Many folks in the Latino community are getting their water from vending machines and who knows what’s in that.”  In December, the Environmental Law Foundation sued Glacier Water Services Inc., the state’s largest vended water company, alleging that in a test one-third of the vending machines failed to meet state standards for contaminants.  Quintero says that to help consumers make informed decisions about what water to drink, two companion bills, Assembly Bill 83 and Senate Bill 50 were introduced into the California legislature in January to make bottled and vended water meet the same requirements as tap water.  “People need the ability to educate themselves,” she says. “We hope that this will help level the playing field.”  Stephen Kay, vice president of communications for the International Bottled Water Association, contends that the bill is unnecessary. He points out that bottled water is considered a food product and thus already meets stringent federal standards.  “These two bills create proscriptive standards for a product that has been regulated by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) since 1938,” he says, explaining that public water style reporting is not feasible due to space constraints on the label and because existing provisions handle products that are out of compliance.  He adds that while his organization supports definitions that determine whether something can be called spring water, or purified water, it’s not necessary to list the specific source of the water. “It’s like identifying which orange grove your orange comes from, or where the water in your soda originated.”  Adan Ortega, Metropolitan Water District vice president of external affairs, says consumers have a right to know what they’re drinking.  “While water agencies have to list the constituents in the water, bottled water companies don’t have to. Without that information, it’s easier for predatory entrepreneurs to rip people off.”  Ortega says that in addition to translating the pamphlets into five Asian languages, MWD is concentrating its education efforts in hospitals and doctor’s offices.  “We’ve learned that if you’re going to inform consumers, you can’t educate them on commercials and billboards, you need to get them when they are focused on health issues.”  Eileen Navarro says that it will take a lot of convincing for her to drink tap water, but she would be willing to listen to what her family doctor has to say. |

*A related article that is has been written more recently can be found here:*

[*http://www.motherjones.com/blue-marble/2011/08/bottled-waters-ethnic-gap*](http://www.motherjones.com/blue-marble/2011/08/bottled-waters-ethnic-gap)

Source 3

American Dental Association found at <http://www.ada.org/en/public-programs/advocating-for-the-public/fluoride-and-fluoridation/fluoridation-faq>

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| Communities fluoridate their water supply because it is a cost-effective public health method that helps prevent cavities. The average cost per year for U.S. communities to fluoridate the water ranges from $.50 per person for large communities to $3.00 per person for small communities.  Cavities are caused by a disease called "caries," which is five times more common than asthma and seven times more common than hayfever in 5-to-17-year-olds. The pain from untreated cavities can cause people to lose sleep, have trouble eating, speaking and paying attention at school or work.  A report from the U.S. Surgeon General in 2000 estimated that 51 million school hours are lost per year because of dental-related illness. Without water fluoridation, that number would likely be much higher.  The American Dental Association (ADA) supports community water fluoridation as the single most effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay. Studies prove water fluoridation continues to be effective in reducing dental decay by at least 25% in children and adults, even in the of era widespread availability of fluoride from other sources, such as fluoride toothpaste.  The ADA, the American Medical Association, the World Health Organization and many others support fluoridation of community water supplies. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has cited community water fluoridation as one of 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century (along with vaccinations, infectious disease control and motor vehicle safety).  So, by simply drinking fluoridated water, you are doing something good for your oral health. |

*The American Dental Association is the leading professional organization for Dentists in the US and is the leading source of oral health related information for dentists and their patients.*

Source 4

Joseph K. Doss, “It’s Not Either/Or,” found at <http://www.businessweek.com/debateroom/archives/2008/09/bottled_water_is_a_big_drain.html>

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| Bottled water is a healthful, convenient food product. Attempts to turn this matter into a “bottled water vs. tap water debate” misrepresent consumer lifestyle choices and buying motivations while oversimplifying the more complex issue of how Americans dispose of, and reduce, their waste.  Bottled water does not compete with tap water, and bottled water companies have no desire to displace strong municipal water systems. Both spring water and purified water categories of bottled water sales have grown rapidly, because consumers value the portability and consistency of fresh taste. Think of all the convenience stores, delis, and gas stations that offer no tap water but have plenty of healthful bottled water.  Most people drink both bottled water and tap water. Far from “competing,” many bottled water companies rely on safe, clean tap water for use in production facilities and as the source water for their purified bottled water.  Consumers need not choose between tap water and bottled water in order to be environmentally responsible. Bottled water packaging is 100% recyclable and among the most highly recycled consumer goods, according to the National Recycling Partnership.  The beverage bottle itself is prime recyclable material when one considers the current value of oil-based plastics as raw materials. Recycled plastic can become new textiles, furniture, or even a new plastic bottle. Plastic water bottles are growing increasingly lighter in weight. Most brands have reduced plastic by at least 40% over the past five years.  Because the FDA classifies it as a food product, bottled water is comprehensively regulated by the FDA and state regulatory agencies. Because the plastic bottle, bottle cap, and label inevitably come from various states, bottled water is subject to the FDA’s interstate jurisdiction, like most other packaged food products. Municipal water is regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and state agencies.  Under the Federal Food, Drug, & Cosmetic Act regulations, bottled water must conform to public health standards as strong as EPA rules for tap water. The current system of regulations for the safety and quality of both bottled water and tap water should provide consumers with the confidence to choose either option.  Any suggestion to the contrary is an attempt to create unnecessary paranoia and do a huge disservice to a thirsty public. |

*Joseph Doss is the President of the International Bottled Water Association, which unifies the bottled water industry and represents uncompromising commitment to the safety and availability of bottled water worldwide. - See more at: http://www.bottledwater.org/about#sthash.rMeVYMTU.dpuf*

Source 5

“Bottled Water Facts,” Ban the Bottle found at

<https://www.banthebottle.net/bottled-water-facts/>

## Why is bottled water a concern? Here are just a few reasons…

* Making bottles to meet America’s demand for bottled water uses more than 17 million barrels of oil annually, enough to fuel 1.3 million cars for a year1. And that’s not even including the oil used for transportation.
* The energy we waste using bottled water would be enough to power 190,000 homes2.
* Last year, the average American used 167 disposable water bottles, but only recycled 38.3
* Americans used about 50 billion plastic water bottles last year. However, the U.S.’s recycling rate for plastic is only 23 percent, which means 38 billion water bottles – more than $1 billion worth of plastic – are wasted each year3.
* The recommended eight glasses of water a day, at U.S. tap rates equals about $.49 per year; that same amount of bottled water is about $1,400.
* Antimony, which is found in PET plastic bottles, in small doses can cause dizziness and depression; in larger doses it can cause nausea, vomiting and death.8

## Ditching bottled water keeps Mother Earth and your wallet green.

* One water pitcher filter can effectively replace as much as 300 standard 16.9-ounce bottles. So you can get great-tasting water without so much waste. Talk about refreshing.
* The average water pitcher filters 240 gallons of water a year for about 19 cents a day4. Put in perspective, to get the same amount of water from bottled water would require 1,818 16.9-ounce water bottles a year5 – at an average cost of a dollar a bottle, that’s $4.98 a day6.
* For about $10 each, you can purchase a 16-ounce or 32-ounce Nalgene bottle, saving you hundreds of dollars a year on bottled water.
* Hydration at its best – carry the water you need and reduce your impact on the environment – one Nalgene bottle can last for decades, making it easy to stop buying single-serve bottled water to fulfill your everyday hydration needs.

## Many people drink bottled water because they believe it to be of a higher quality, cleaner and better-tasting, but that’s not necessarily true.

* In the United States, 24 percent of bottled water sold is either Pepsi’s Aquafina (13 percent of the market) or Coke’s Dasani (11 percent of the market). Both brands are bottled, purified municipal water3.
* If you don’t like the taste of your tap water, try a filtered water pitcher.
* Dr. Gina Solomon, a senior scientist at the Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental advocacy group, told The New York Times that “there is no reason to believe that bottled water is safer than tap water.”7
* In the U.S., public water is regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which requires multiple daily tests for bacteria and makes results available to the public. The Food and Drug Administration, which regulates bottled water, only requires weekly testing and does not share its findings with the EPA or the public7.

1. Pacific Institute. “Fact Sheet: Bottled Water and Energy – Getting to 17 Million Barrels.” December 2007.
2. [“Not Disposable Anymore](http://web.archive.org/web/20080501050251/http://www.pbs.org/pov/borders/2004/water/water_disposable.html" \t "_blank).” P.O.V.’s Borders. 2004. PBS.
3. Fishman, Charles. “Message in a Bottle.” Fast Company Magazine July 2007: 110.
4. This cost assumes the purchase of a $25 pitcher (one filter included), plus 5 replacement filters at $9 each, for a total yearly cost of $70, or $0.19 cents a day.
5. Each filter produces 40 gallons of water and the average owner uses 6 filters in a year, to produce 240 gallons, or 30,720 ounces, of fresh-filtered water. 30,720 ounces is equivalent to the water found in 1,818 16.9-ounce water bottles.
6. Purchasing 1,818 16.9-ounce water bottles at the cost of $1 each costs $1,818. Over the course of a year, that’s $4.98 a day.
7. Burros, Marian. “Fighting the Tide, a Few Restaurants Tilt to Tap Water.” The New York Times [New York City, NY] 30 May 2007: Section F, Page 1.
8. Shotyk, William. “Toxic risk in bottled water?” Royal Society of Chemistry. September 2006.

*Ban the Bottle is an organization promoting the environment by advocating bans on one-time-use plastic water bottles. They promote the use of reusable bottles and promote water-related initiatives.*

*A similar article can be found here:*

[*http://www.huffingtonpost.com/norm-schriever/10-things-you-can-do-toda\_b\_3834859.html*](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/norm-schriever/10-things-you-can-do-toda_b_3834859.html)

Source 6

Dasani Water Bottle commercial:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=30&v=WvCRRBx0-ZE>

*DASANI is a brand of purified water manufactured and distributed by The Coca-Cola Company*

Source 7

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) informational poster about the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is the name of a collection of litter that is spread throughout the NorthWest Pacific Ocean. NOAA is part of the US Department of Commerce and has as its mission to understand and share knowledge about the natural environment with the public. They strive to conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources.

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