

**COUNTY OF SONOMA  
AGENDA ITEM  
SUMMARY REPORT**

**Clerk of the Board Use Only**  
**Meeting Date**                      **Held Until**  
 /   /                                      /   /  
**Agenda Item No:**                      **Agenda Item No:**  
 \_\_\_\_\_                                      \_\_\_\_\_

**Department:** Board of Supervisors

(   ) **4/5 Vote Required**

**Contact:**  
Supervisor Brown

**Phone:**  
(707) 565-2241

**Board Date:**  
September 29,  
2009

**Deadline for Board Action:**

**AGENDA SHORT TITLE:** Policy Regarding Bottled Water

**REQUESTED BOARD ACTION:**

Concurrent resolution establishing policy banning the use of County funds to purchase single serving, disposable water bottles for use in County facilities or at County sponsored events

**CURRENT FISCAL YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT**

**EXPENDITURES**

**ADD'L FUNDS REQUIRING BOARD**

**Estimated Cost**                      \$

**Contingencies**                      \$  
(Fund Name:)

**Amount Budgeted**                      \$

**Unanticipated Revenue**                      \$  
(Source:)

**Other Avail Approp.**                      \$  
(Explain below)

**Other Transfer(s)**                      \$  
(Source:)

**Additional Requested:**                      \$

**Add'l Funds Requested:**                      \$

**Explanation (if required):**

**Prior Board Action(s):**

None

**Alternatives - Results of Non-Approval:**

County of Sonoma will continue to purchase water in disposable bottles

**Background:**

There are many reasons for proposing an immediate ban on the use of county funds for the purchase of single-serving, disposable water bottles, and, after an audit by General Services to ensure all employees have easy access to potable water, of banning the use of county funds to purchase water dispenser bottles, among them:

1. Job losses due to budget cuts at the Federal, State and thus County level. During the 2008-2009 fiscal year the County spent approximately \$25,000 on single serving water bottles, and approximately \$45,000 on water dispenser bottles. During these tough budget times the County needs to focus on saving jobs - finding ways to save even one job is important.
2. Sonoma County has clean, safe drinking water.
3. The environmental impact on the bottled water industry is profound. The County of Sonoma County has adopted a Community Climate Action Plan in which the County, and all nine cities within the County, intends to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 25% below 1990 levels by 2015. Therefore policies must be initiated that limit the most significant contributors to climate protection.

**Exceptions:**

This ban is not intended to limit access to water to any County employee. It is important to hydrate often during the day. In addition, this ban is not intended to limit water to any County resident in the event of an emergency. Emergency Services will continue to have bottled water for training purposes and in the event of an emergency. Although the goal is to reduce the use of County funds for water bottles to zero the reality is that some County funds will still be used for the purchase of bottled water. Many employees work outdoors and in locations where

**Attachments:** Resolution.

**On File With Clerk:**

**CLERK OF THE BOARD USE ONLY**

**Board Action (If other than "Requested")**

**Vote:**

potable water is unavailable. Although all departments are encouraged to seek alternatives to the purchase of bottled water (i.e. Using reusable water bottles and refilling them with tap water, or in the field water from large water containers filled with tap water) exceptions to the ban have been made:

- a. For employees engaged in emergency response activities; or
- b. To protect public health and safety; or
- c. To meet ADA Title 1/11 requirements; or
- d. Due to the fact that potable water is not available; or
- e. For other legal or contractual reasons.

**County efforts and efforts outside of the County:**

Individual County employees and Departments already have recognized the environmental need to use reusable water containers. The Board of Supervisors and staff all use reusable water bottles, or reusable cups/mugs, and either refill them at home, from the tap in their kitchen or from a 2-gallon container in their refrigerator. CAO staff purchases, with their own money, filters for a water container in their refrigerator. The Department of Health Services unilaterally instituted a ban on the purchase of single serving bottles of water over a year ago. At the Day of Caring in September 2009 participants were given a reusable water bottle and water was provided at remote sites via large water containers that were filled with tap water. The Sonoma County Water Agency provided reusable water bottles to participants on a recent water tour and encouraged local officials to refill them with tap water.

Cities and Counties throughout the United States are instituting bans on the purchase of bottled water with government funds, among them San Francisco, Davis, and Seattle.

Sales of bottled water have fallen for the first time in at least five years.

Local businesses both supply and sell reusable water bottle containers. All citizens of Sonoma County are encouraged to consider alternatives to the purchase of bottled water, and to those who do use bottled water to recycle those bottles.

**Environmental Impacts of Bottled Water:**

The use of reusable containers helps the environment and saves water. Tap water is a local product that needs no packaging. Research indicates that it takes three liters of water to produce one liter of bottled water.

In addition to saving water, the use of reusable water containers saves oil and reduces the impact of global warming - it takes oil to make the plastic in bottled water, and oil to transport the water from its source to the consumer. The result is greenhouse gases, a primary cause of global warming. The production of bottled water for U.S. consumption, reported to be 8.25 billion gallons of bottled water in 2006, required the equivalent of more than 17 million barrels of oil.

**Recommended Board Actions:**

Approve the attached Resolution.