

Bottled Water Impacts The Environment

Contributed by Marlene Affeld
Monday, 22 September 2008

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The majority of Americans have a strong sense of environmental and social responsibility. We endeavor to make environmentally beneficial choices in many aspects of our daily living, yet we ignore one of the major contributors to the plight of the planet.

Worldwide in excess of one billion people do not have an uncontaminated source of clean drinking water, this is in excess of 1/6 of the world population, yet we, as Americans, spend billions of dollars yearly for the convenience of drinking from a plastic bottle instead of a water tap. Shame on us.

1.5 million tons of plastic are used to manufacture bottled water every year. It also takes in excess of 25 times the amount of water to make each plastic bottle than the bottle contains. 300 million gallons of bottled water are imported to the United States yearly.

In America bottled water is often simply an indulgence. Despite our justifications, it is not a harmless indulgence. Bottled water is an environmental catastrophe. Thirty years ago bottled water barely survived as a business in the United States. Today Americans spent more on "designer" bottled water than we spent on iPods or entertainment tickets - \$15 billion in 2007. The expected United States expenditure for bottled water will be \$16 billion a year before the end of the decade.

As a country we consume more than 30 billion single-serving bottles of water per year. Bottled water is the fastest growing beverage industry in the world, worth up to \$22 billion a year. Less than 15% of plastic bottles are recycled, the rest end up in the refuse systems and cost America's cities over 70 million per year to handle clean up and landfill expenditures. America yearly produces in excess of 800,000 tons of plastic bottle pollution that substantially magnifies global warming.

in 2007, Americans trashed more than 38 billion plastic water bottles, approximately \$1 billion worth of plastic that could have been recycled. That's an unforgivable waste, especially considering 1.5 million barrels of oil - enough to power 100,000 cars for a year - were consumed to manufacture these bottles. And that's not even including the oil and gas required for shipping and delivering this huge volume of liquid.

If you are choosing to purchase bottled water, you are basically buying plastic, which is manufactured from petroleum products. When we buy a bottle of water, what we're often purchasing is the bottle its self. One of the main problems with bottled water production is the reliance on fossil fuels. From manufacturing to transportation, bottled water relies on oil, using 17 million barrels of oil and producing massive amounts of carbon dioxide every year.

In the United States alone, we are hauling 1 billion liters of water around a week in ships trains and trucks. That is a weekly giant convoy equivalent to 37,800 18 wheelers. Water weighs 8 1/3 pounds a gallon. It is so heavy you cannot fill an 18 wheeler with bottled water--you have to allow empty space.

There is an simple eco friendly solution. Tap water is much less expensive. As a reporter for the NY Times pointed out, almost all municipal water in America is so good that nobody needs to import a single bottle from Italy or France or the Fiji Islands.

Clean and pure drinking water should be public and inexpensive. The more the wealthy opt out of drinking tap water, the less political support and funds there will be for investing in developing, maintaining and repairing America's public water supply. That would be a dreadful loss.

Access to affordable, pure water is basic to a nations health. In Fiji, a state-of-the-art factory spins out more than a million bottles a day of the trendiest bottled water on the U.S. market, while more than half the people in Fiji do not have a pure or dependable source of drinking water. Therefore it is easier for the average American in Seattle or Boston to quench their thirst with refreshing Fiji water than it is for the majority of people in Fiji.

Should you elect to get your suggested eight to ten glasses a day from bottled water, you may spend up to \$1,500 or more every year. An equal amount of tap water would cost pennies a day. Recent studies show that many brands of bottled water fail to meet industry guidelines and the cost of even poor quality bottled water can grow quite high.

A lot of bottled water is just plain tap water. Many bottled water businesses repackage tap water into plastic bottles, then

sell them back to you at prices higher than gas and increasing just as rapidly. Aquafina, as an example, has finally been pressured into amending its labels to advise consumers that Aquafina water comes from tap water. Why not just drink tap water? In fact, more than a quarter of bottled water is just processed tap water.

Plastic containers leach toxic chemicals. Have you considered why your plastic bottle of water has a label warning telling you not to reuse it? The longer you have that bottle, the more likely it is to leach toxic chemicals into your water.

There is a solution. If you are not confident in your local water supply or wish to safely filter tap water when on the go, carbon-filtered tap water is safer and costs much less than bottled water. According to the Environmental Working Group, carbon filtration of tap water will dramatically lower levels of toxic by products; it is also 10 to 20 times less expensive than bottled water, and does not produce the waste and pollution associated with the packaging and transport of bottled water.

A portable water filter is a perfect solution for water filtration on the go. A portable water filter allows anyone to filter their own water, no matter where they travel; across town or around the world. A portable water filter allows you to free yourself from any unpleasant taste, additives or contaminants while protecting the environment and your pocketbook. Get the whole family involved. A five member family could save well over \$7,500.00 a year.

Stop being unwitting victims of manipulative advertising. When an entire industry is built up by overwhelming us with a product we do not need, when an entire industry is based on packaging and presentation, not the product, it is worth asking how that happened and what the future impact is upon our precious planet.

About the Author:

Carbon Filtered Water Bottles Help Protect The Planet! Live Green! Save Green! Protect The Planet