

December 17, 2007

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

City Council on December 11, 12 and 13, 2007, referred the following Motion to the Executive Committee:

**M183 Possible Revenue Sources – Municipal Tap Water Permits**

*Moved by Councillor Saundercook, seconded by Councillor Ainslie*

**SUMMARY:**

Large bottled water companies are currently utilizing municipal tap water systems to bottle water for the purpose of sale and profit. Bottled water is reported as being the fastest growing, least regulated, and by far the most profitable section of the whole beverage industry.

Bottled water companies are currently taking municipal tap water, a public commodity and natural resource, at a very high volume and re-selling it to our own taxpayers at an exponentially inflated rate.

In addition to this, the bottled water industry also has a significant effect on municipal recycling infrastructure and landfill capacities. As reported in the Toronto Star, Geoff Rathbone, General Manager of Solid Waste Management Services, indicated that, in 2006, the weight of empty water bottles recycled by the City of Toronto was approximately 1,000 tonnes, which translates into 65 million individual water bottles. Moreover, only about 65 percent of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles are actually recycled. The rest end up in landfill and take thousands of years to break down.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. That the General Manager, Toronto Water, report to the Executive Committee on the number of Tap Water Permits currently issued, informing Council of all terms of the permit including the rate charged, the amount of water permitted to be extracted and the length of the permit.
2. That the General Manager, Toronto Water, report to the Executive Committee on the effects that the industry is having on the City's water tables.

3. That the General Manager, Toronto Water, report on the feasibility of recovering royalty payments from the sale of bottled water, or significantly raising the permit costs to correspond with the massive profits being made by bottled water companies who are permitted to take water from the City of Toronto water system.
4. That the General Manager, Toronto Water, in consultation with the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, address the significantly growing impact of PET bottles on our recycling infrastructure and landfill capacities by examining and reporting back on possible Blue Box alternatives, such as a deposit-return system similar to ones already in place in many Provinces.
5. That the City Manager report on the issue of high volume “tap water taking” to the Province of Ontario and request that they levy an effective surtax on all bottled water companies, to be utilized and earmarked to sustain and retrofit water systems of municipalities, as well as for water conservation purposes.

Council also had before it a communication (December 10, 2007) from Anthony van Heyningen, Executive Director, Refreshments Canada.

for City Clerk

M. Toft/cd

Attach.

c. Anthony van Heyningen, Executive Director, Refreshments Canada