

Angela Logomasini, Ph.D.



The Battle over the Bottle

As bottled water continues to grow in popularity, so do legislative actions against it. The Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI) recently released a study on the value of bottled water and has set up a coalition to promote consumer choice. Stephanie Harris, managing editor of *Water Quality Products*, recently spoke with Angela Logomasini, Ph.D., director of risk and environmental policy for CEI, to gain insight on the issue.

The bottled water industry has been faced with legislation in recent years that prohibits consumers in areas across the U.S. from purchasing bottled water. These sorts of actions are referred to by many as “nanny state legislation,” in which government policies are considered to be excessive in its desire to control or “nanny” particular aspects of society.

Stephanie Harris: Tell me about your coalition and what you hope to accomplish.

Angela Logomasini, Ph.D.: The CEI is a free-market public policy group, and we have worked on numerous nanny state regulations. I think that taxing and regulating bottled water is probably the ultimate nanny state regulation.

We have a petition to promote consumer choice and to fight the bans and taxes. We also have a coalition website with other policy groups. It covers all of the issues and claims that environmentalists are making about bottled water and disputing them, making the point that bottled water has a value and it is a consumer choice—if somebody thinks it has value, they should have the right to make that choice without taxes and regulations.

Harris: What are some of the claims being made against bottled water?

Logomasini: One claim is that bottled water is no different than tap water. Well, it is different in a lot of ways. One being it is in a bottle so the delivery system is completely different, which makes it a convenient option for people who are on the go. The package also ensures that it is sanitary. It is different than tap water, which travels through pipes and has other issues.

Environmentalists have said that bottled water is simply bottled tap water, but in reality 75% of bottled water is from springs and natural sources. The rest of it, if it is bottled from municipal sources, is treated and has to meet certain standards and regulations beyond what the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) regulations are for tap water. The standards for bottled water are different—they basically meet EPA regulations plus packaging regulations, which are just as stringent, if not more.

Another claim is that bottled water is unduly wasteful, more wasteful than other products, but there is really no evidence for that. It is not a huge portion of solid waste, and putting taxes and bans on it is not going to have much of an impact on the amount of waste that goes into a landfill. Bottled water containers are recyclable and the part of the story that is not being told is that the 5-gal containers are recycled at nearly a 100% rate. They are used 30 to 50 times over, so they are an environmentally friendly product from that perspective.

There are also a lot of claims about the chemicals in the products, but a lot of times the chemicals referred to do not even appear in the bottles. BPA is not found in single-serving containers. It is found in the 5-gal containers, but at such a low level that it is inconsequential. There has never been a public health issue cited from [chemicals in bottled water containers], it’s just speculative and way overblown.

Harris: What are the benefits of bottled water?

Logomasini: The convenience and portability issues are very important. During emergencies, the bottled water industry itself is very generous and provides a lot of bottled water and a lot of water in varying forms to take care of people.

There are also many potential applications around the world—especially the use of bottled water in developing nations. It is certainly valuable for people who are traveling and are exposed to different qualities of water. Periodically, consumers might get a phone call about their tap water having been compromised; bottled water has always been important in those cases. It is also important if you have a compromised immune system—the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and EPA both recommend bottled water as an option for people with compromised immune systems because tap water, although very safe in this country, has different risks. There is a greater risk for potential bacterial contamination.

Harris: What are some current policies that undermine bottled water?

Logomasini: The Chicago tax on bottled water is probably one of the most egregious ones. Toronto has also banned bottled water in government buildings, and this is looking to be done around San Francisco as well. The next level is they start telling people they cannot bring bottled water to work. It was decided in Salt Lake City at one point that fire-fighters would not be able to get bottled water.

Bottled water is being removed from vending machines in college campuses. In schools, children will have the option of a sugar drink or drinking out of a dirty water fountain. There have been different approaches in different places, and it is really restrictive. *wqp*

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Faucet Companies Certified for Low Lead Products



NSF Intl. has announced that Kohler, Moen and Price Pfister have become the first faucet companies the organization has certified to have plumbing products comply with the new low lead requirements, ahead

of the Jan. 1, 2010, deadline.

The new section of NSF/ANSI Standard 61–Annex G, Weighted Average Lead Content Evaluation Procedure to a 0.25% Lead Requirement, includes recent legislation in California and Vermont that mandates a maximum weighted average lead content requirement of ≤0.25%.

S&A Abahsain Co. Ltd. & Flowserve Sign Joint Venture

Flowserve Corp. has announced a joint venture with S&A Abahsain Co., Ltd. to include the manufacturing of control valves, ball valves, plug valves, butterfly valves, and electric and pneumatic actuators for the oil and gas, petrochemical, power and water industries.

The joint venture, Flowserve/Abahsain Flow Control Co., Ltd., will begin manufacturing from a temporary facility in Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia.



Pentair Adds Marketing & Sales Roles

Shelly Johnson, WQA CWS-VI, is Pentair’s new marketing manager, whole-sale channel, with a focus on American Plumber brand water filtration products.



Neal White has been promoted to national sales manager for the wholesale plumbing channel, taking over sales responsibilities for the American Plumber product line.

Kinetico Co-Founder Retires

William C. Prior, founder of Kinetico, Inc., is officially retiring from the company. Prior is launching Tangent Co., LLC, a resurrected version of the company Kinetico grew from, and is assembling a team of water treatment scientists and engineers with a goal of pursuing emerging water treatment technologies.

Prior’s work earned him recognition by WQA with its Lifetime Membership Award and induction into its Hall of Fame. *wqp*

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