

# CALL TO ACTION



## Building a Bottled Water Free Campus



## Dear Ryerson Campus Group/Department,

It wasn't so long ago that finding a water fountain on campus was more difficult than it seemed. Fountains were few and far between, many stopped working and never got fixed, and others were hidden away and hard to find. Soon enough, the only option for water was from a vending machine – and it wasn't cheap. At nearly \$2.00 per bottle, it soon became clear that something had to change – after all, it was unfair to have to pay for something that should always be free.

As part of our mandates, the Ryerson Students' Union (RSU) and Continuing Education Students Association of Ryerson (CESAR) work to promote and advocate for more sustainable practices throughout the University community and as part of the broader student movement.

At the November 2009 Annual General Meeting, members of the RSU voted overwhelmingly in favor of creating a campaign that would call on the University administration to make Ryerson a bottled water free campus. Recognizing the need to re-invest in public water infrastructure, students worked together to launch the bottled water free campaign; a campaign to fight back against the corporatization of water, a basic human right, and advocate for free, public drinking water on campus.

Following campus-wide consultations, the President of the University, Sheldon Levy, and the Presidents of RSU and CESAR came together to sign the Ryerson Water Pledge – a commitment to progressively eliminate the sale of bottled water on campus by September 2013. The pledge also commits the University to update water infrastructure, such as fountains and fill-stations, needed for students, staff, and faculty to access clean drinking water on campus. The pledge was signed on March 11, 2010 – the first Bottled Water Free Day in Canada. Ryerson was the first campus in Ontario and fourth in Canada to make such a commitment.

Since signing the pledge, we have been working to mobilize our members around the campaign. We joined other students' unions across the country in signing an orientation pledge to ensure that all of our orientation week activities, including our annual Parade and Picnic concert, are bottled water free. We made changes to our own policies to provide free tap water at all events, installed water refill stations in the Student Centre, offer free water bottle refills in Oakham Café and the Ram in the Rye, and provide over 3000 free reusable water bottles at our events throughout the year.

March 18, 2013 marks the third Bottled Water Free Day in Canada, and we invite you to celebrate with us the three-year anniversary of the water pledge and join us in making Ryerson bottled water free.

We know that in order to have a successful campus-wide campaign, it's important for every group and department to join. We invite you to endorse the bottled water free campaign, take the pledge within your group or department, and help us in making Ryerson a more sustainable campus.

This toolkit contains many helpful resources for going bottled water free. From a sample pledge to how to take action and get involved, we hope these resources will help build a campus-wide movement for going back to the tap. Please feel free to contact us should you require additional resources or campaign materials such as leaflets, stickers and buttons at any time.

Furthermore, we would like to meet with your group or department to discuss how we can better work together to achieve the campaign's goals. We would appreciate the opportunity to make a presentation to your board, executive, or members to raise greater awareness of the campaign and discuss how each of us play an important role in helping to build a campus where water is always free.

Let's continue to work together to ensure that the Ryerson community plays its part in protecting the environment.

**Yours in solidarity,**

**The Ryerson Students' Union and  
Continuing Education Students Association of Ryerson**



# RYERSON UNIVERSITY WATER PLEDGE

**In signing this pledge, the members of Ryerson University pledge to:**

**Progressively and systematically eliminate the distribution and sale of plastic bottled water on campus and at all University events;**

**Develop environmental and health education programming in conjunction with the Ryerson Students' Union and Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson to encourage the University community to consume water sustainably;**

**Develop a Water Access Plan to upgrade current infrastructure to increase access to public water and water fill stations along with working to ensure that all campus buildings include adequate access to public water fountains and water fill stations;**

**Offer public tap water at all University events and programs where refreshments are served;**

**Achieve the ultimate goal of a University community that is bottled water free by September 2013.**

**Dated at Toronto, Ontario on this 11th day of March 2010.**

**Signed on behalf of Ryerson University's students, faculty, and staff by**

**Sheldon Levy, President and Vice-Chancellor  
Ryerson University**

**Jermaine Bagnall, President  
Ryerson Students' Union**

**Mohammad Ali Aumeer, President  
Continuing Education Students' Association  
of Ryerson**



# Why a Bottled Water Free Campus?



**1. Bottled water is bad for the environment** - the production, transportation, and disposal of bottled water harms the environment by depleting local water sources, consuming massive amounts of energy, producing greenhouse gases, and creating waste



**2. Tap Water is Free** - bottled water is 240 to 10,000 times more expensive than water from the tap, even though 25% of bottled water originates from tap water



**3. Tap water is tested more than bottled** - the City of Toronto tests its water every 4 hours, in contrast to bottled water facilities that receive government inspections every 3-6 years



**4. Bottled water is misleading** - bottled water marketing schemes undermine public faith in tap water and have us believe that our water is not fit to drink



**5. Water is a human right** - clean, safe, and accessible water is a fundamental human right - not a commodity, and is accessible to all regardless of social class or wealth

Campuses across the country are taking a stance in support of public water as a way of challenging the corporate control of water on their campus. Back the Tap is a national campaign of the Canadian Federation of Students, Polaris Institute and Sierra Youth Coalition aimed at building bottled water free communities from coast to coast. To date, over 25 universities and colleges, 8 school board, and 86 municipalities have pledged to go bottled water free and build support for public water in their region.

The bottled water free campaign is about more than just bottled water. It's about shifting the conversation back to the tap to support our public water system. According to the 2009 Campus Water Fountains Report by the Polaris Institute, there is a disturbing trend of some institutions decommissioning water fountains in older buildings and excluding water fountains in new buildings. In these cases students, staff, and faculty were left to either bring water from home, drink from bathroom sinks or purchase bottled water. The disappearance of water fountains is caused by a combination of trends including insufficient building codes and regulation, the increase of bottled water consumption, beverage exclusivity contracts, and the de-prioritizing of public water infrastructure.

This is a broader systemic issue in our society. Bottled water sales in Canada almost doubled between 2003 and 2008, growing from sales figures of \$809 million to \$1.6 billion respectively. We must act now for a more sustainable society and future.

**For more information on the national bottled water free campaign, visit [www.backthetap.ca](http://www.backthetap.ca)**

**For more information on the campaign at Ryerson, visit [www.rsuonline.ca](http://www.rsuonline.ca)**

**Take the personal pledge.  
Go bottled water free!**

# Making Your Events Bottled Water Free

## Small Events & Meetings

- Purchase reusable 2L water containers and place one on each table.
- Encourage participants to bring their own reusable bottle or purchase eco-friendly cups from the Member Services Office in the Student Centre lobby. Contact [memberservices@rsuonline.ca](mailto:memberservices@rsuonline.ca) to place an order.
- When booking rooms in the Student Centre, water service is always free.

## Large Events & Conferences

- Purchase reusable water jugs and place in a central location or where food is served. Jugs are typically 5-10 gallons each and can be purchased from most department stores.
- Encourage participants to bring their own reusable bottle or purchase eco-friendly cups from the Member Services Office in the Student Centre lobby. Contact [memberservices@rsuonline.ca](mailto:memberservices@rsuonline.ca) to place an order.
- RSU Campus Groups have access to free water jugs for events on campus.

## Outdoor Events

- Contact the City of Toronto to book a water truck that provides access to a portable water fountain. To make a booking, visit [www.toronto.ca/water/htotogo](http://www.toronto.ca/water/htotogo).



## Sold at the Member Services Office:

**9/10oz cups**  
(50)  
\$5

**Reusable Water Bottle**  
(from vending machine  
in the Student Centre)  
\$2





# TAKE ACTION NOW!

## 5 Things You Can Do

- 1. Invite an organiser to give a presentation about the campaign** to your executive, board, or members. For more information and to schedule a date, email Andrew McAllister, RSU's Vice-President Operations at [vp.operations@rsuonline.ca](mailto:vp.operations@rsuonline.ca) or Samson Romero, CESAR's Programming & Outreach Coordinator at [outreach@mycesar.ca](mailto:outreach@mycesar.ca).
- 2. Pass a motion to endorse the campaign and incorporate it** into your existing organisational structure.
- 3. Develop internal policies and procedures that restrict the use of bottled water** for your meetings, conferences, and events – and work to provide free tap water instead.
- 4. Engage your membership in the campaign by passing along information** on what your group or department is doing to go bottled water free. Contact us for sample materials and other resources.
- 5. Join the RSU and CESAR on March 18, 2013 to celebrate Bottled Water Free Day!** Sign and display the bottled water free pledge included in this toolkit.



**For more information or to get involved in the Bottled Water Free campaign, contact**

Andrew McAllister, RSU's Vice-President Operations  
at [vp.operations@rsuonline.ca](mailto:vp.operations@rsuonline.ca)  
or Samson Romero, CESAR's Programming & Outreach Coordinator  
at [outreach@mycesar.ca](mailto:outreach@mycesar.ca)



[www.mycesar.ca](http://www.mycesar.ca)



**Ryerson Students' Union**  
*Local 24 Canadian Federation of Students*

[www.rsuonline.ca](http://www.rsuonline.ca)

# Sample Bottled Water Free Motion

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**WHEREAS** clean, safe, and accessible water is a fundamental human right, not a commodity; and

**WHEREAS** students at Ryerson are currently working with the Ryerson administration to progressively eliminate the sale of bottled water on campus and increase the restoration of water fountains; and

**WHEREAS** bottled water is 240-10,000 times more expensive than water from the tap, even though more than 25% of bottled water originates from municipal tap water; and

**WHEREAS** public tap water is safe and healthy, and significantly more accessible and environmentally sustainable than bottled water; and

**WHEREAS** water is a human right, but due to commercialisation, is being privatized, bottled and sold back to the people; and

**WHEREAS** it is often through leading by example that change can be achieved, therefore;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** (name of organization) endorse the Bottled Water Free campaign and make a commitment to go bottled water free; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** (name of organization) join the call to progressively eliminate the sale of bottled water on campus while working to improve water fountain infrastructure; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** (name of organization) make all efforts to provide tap water for consumption at its meetings, conferences, and events, and that the promotion of bottled water be halted; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** (name of organization) takes steps in informing its members of its commitment to going bottle water free.



# Bottled Water Free Pledge

endorses the Bottled Water Free campaign and pledges to provide tap water for consumption at all meetings and events where refreshments are served.

Date

