

Proposal for a Plastic Bottle Fee at the University of Louisville

To: Provost Willihnganz

From: Sustainability Council and Group Recycling And Sustainable Solutions (GRASS)

Date: September 26, 2012

We propose that the University of Louisville institute a plastic bottle fee of five cents per bottled beverage sold through vending machines on campus beginning in Spring 2013. The fee would generate an estimated \$22,000 each year which would be used to install water bottle refilling stations across the university and for other non-restricted purposes to facilitate tap water consumption and to reduce waste. Water bottle refilling stations are needed to provide the UofL community with a more sustainable, cheaper, and healthier alternative to purchasing bottled water. Water filling stations range in cost and quality from simple gooseneck spouts added onto existing drinking fountains (\$200) to new stations with touch-less sensors and digital counters displaying the number of bottles saved (\$2000+). Instituting a fee as opposed to a banⁱ on bottled water would provide more flexibility, less enforcement challenges, and a revenue stream to improve campus facilities.

The goal of program would be to reduce the number of plastic bottles bought and disposed on campus by offering a more attractive tap water solution. Many of the drinking fountains and sinks on campus are not meant for filling water bottles as currently designed. It can be slow, difficult, or impossible to refill water bottles using our current infrastructure. We are hoping to generate funds through this new fee to install both new and retrofit bottle filling stations in all types of buildings on all three campuses. We would like to start by installing stations in the most high-traffic, high-visibility locations like the Student Activities Center.

Louisville's local tap water is one of the cleanest and best-tasting in the country, having won national awards. Why should students, employees, and departments pay for bottled water and generate more waste when our local tap water is award-winning? Switching to tap water will also help save the university, students, and employees money that would otherwise go to purchasing bottled water. It would also help reduce littering and waste generation on campus. Plastic is produced from a non-renewable resource, does not decompose, and poses a risk to wildlife which may ingest or get caught in it.

We need to facilitate the change in behavior around bottled water at UofL and believe that instituting a small bottle fee to fund water filling stations is the most logical first step in that direction.

ⁱ Campus-wide bottled water bans have been instituted at schools such as [University of Portland](#), [University of Vermont](#), and [Washington University in St. Louis](#).