

Elizabeth Griswold Remarks
Guelph City Council
November 7, 2016

Mayor and Council, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you tonight.

I am Elizabeth Griswold and serve as the Executive Director of the Canadian Bottled Water Association.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today to discuss our industry.

The Canadian Bottled Water Association is made up of about 60 members.

Members adhere to our production code of conduct and standards. All members meet or exceed stringent regulations governing their water takings.

We are sensitive that Guelph Council and residents are primarily concerned with the local issues. However, there may be benefit from a broader, provincial perspective, and some facts about bottled water.

Bottled water companies are one category of many groundwater takers with permits in Ontario. Our members represent a small percentage of Ontario's water takings.

Permitted water volumes can often sound like significant amounts. We never hear about the overall water takings of ALL industry.

To put volumes in context, bottled water in Ontario account for less than 0.5% of all water takings.

In the case of groundwater sources water bottlers purchase their land, invest in 100% of the cost to find, permit, bottle and monitor the water taken from land that they own.

Our companies pay a water taking permit application fee, water conservation charges, environmental stewardship fees for recycling programs, and the full cost of retaining professional hydrogeologists and scientists to evaluate their water takings.

Members sell to retailers at pennies per bottle. The retail price of a twenty-four case of bottled water at Costco or Wal-Mart can be bought for three dollars.

... Or at a convenience store you may pay \$3 for a bottle of water. Understand that price is not set by, or benefit our members.

Our environmental standards are world class. CBWA members have bought millions of dollars of monitoring equipment to use, know, and understand water levels. Our members have voluntarily reduced their water takings during dry conditions, like what happened here in Guelph.

Here and in other communities our members work with local and provincial governments, and conservation authorities on managing important groundwater resources for the sake of all of us.

Our members have the same passion and motivation to ensure the long-term sustainability of their – and all - groundwater resources.

Particular to CBWA, our members are leaders in recycling. Our industry uses plastic from food and other beverage containers received from municipalities, and turns it into food grade plastic.

Did you know, for example, one of our largest producers took steps in 2009 to become the first beverage company in North America to produce recycled content in a closed loop system, meaning that they only use recycled plastics for the product they produce.

While we do not support being singled out as an industry, the CBWA welcomes a dialogue about water and water resources that is based on science, and public trust.

We will continue to be an active participant with the Province in examining water policy and look forward to continued discussions.

Two quick final points:

I have had the privilege to serve with Emergency Preparedness Ontario. Our industry is often the first to be called during crisis situations, when safe and reliable drinking water is needed.

I must also mention, the over 2000 jobs supported by the bottled water industry, many of which are found in your community.

We agree there is a need for a better conversation on water. We look forward to that conversation.

Thank you for letting me join you tonight.

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