



Latest Poll on Canada's Bottled Water Industry Sheds New Light on Consumer Attitudes and Misguided Government Regulations

Majority of Ontarians Support Bottled Water and Reject Premier Wynne's Singling Out of the Bottled Water Industry for Increased Fees

TORONTO, ONTARIO (Marketwired – February 3, 2017) A new poll of 1,500 people in Ontario reveals that the provincial government's public policies when it comes to the bottled water industry are significantly out of step with public opinion.

The poll, commissioned by the Canadian Bottled Water Association and carried out by Forum Research, includes findings that shed new light on Ontarians' attitudes towards the industry, their consumption habits, and their views on the government's approach to regulating the industry.

According to the province-wide poll which has a margin of error of less than 2% and was conducted between January 21st and January 24th, 79% of Ontarians purchased or consumed bottled water in the past 12 months, confirming the popularity of the product.

Nearly a third (32%) of respondents said the reason they purchased bottled water was due to convenience, and more than a quarter (28%) buy bottled water as an alternative to other bottled beverages.

Another key finding is more than half (52%) of those surveyed said they drink bottled water over tap water outside of the home, and that when it comes to recycling habits, 95% said they recycle their empty water bottles where recycling is available.

Significantly, nearly three quarters of those surveyed (72%) said they don't think it's fair for the government to increase fees for commercial groundwater takings if only bottled water companies are singled out and golf courses and other industries are exempt.

The poll comes on the heels of the Wynne government's decision last month to arbitrarily increase the fee for water taking permits from \$3.71 for every million litres of groundwater taken in Ontario to \$503.71 -a fee ostensibly designed to recover the costs of managing groundwater taken by water bottlers but one that was arrived at long before the findings of a two year review of existing rules for water bottlers.

“What these poll results tell us is that not only do the majority of people in this province consume bottled water, they don’t agree with the way the Wynne government has handled this file,” says Elizabeth Griswold, Executive Director of the Canadian Bottled Water Association. “This poll speaks to the issue of fairness and consumer choice and should be a wake up call for the government who seem determined to make policy up on the fly, taking their cue from a small group of people intent on spreading misinformation and putting an entire industry that employs more than 2,000 people in this province at risk.”

In addition to the massive 13,500% fee increase which only applies to the bottled ground water industry in Ontario, Premier Wynne went on the record last year suggesting she wants a bigger discussion on the entire future of the industry.

“We have been very clear that our industry is prepared to work in good faith throughout the consultation process and that a more thoughtful, science based, transparent approach needs to be taken,” says Griswold. “What we aren’t prepared to accept is a review process where the outcome seems to be pre-determined.”

Among some of the other findings of the poll are while 76% of respondents indicate they primarily drink tap water at home, over two-thirds of respondents (68%) also rejected the Ontario Liberal government limiting consumer options when it comes to what they eat or drink. And seven in 10 disagreed that bottled water produced in Ontario should be subject to additional government imposed charges when imported water is not required to pay those fees.

“This latest poll is just the first step our industry will be taking to set the record straight and tackle head on the misinformation and misconceptions that are being perpetuated,” says Griswold. “For example, 74% of those polled didn’t know that our entire industry takes less than one per cent of permitted groundwater takings in Ontario. Singling out our industry sends the wrong message to every industry out there. And that is, locate and invest in Ontario at your own peril.”

About CBWA

The Canadian Bottled Water Association (CBWA) was founded in 1992 to represent the Canadian bottled water industry and to ensure a high standard of quality for bottled water. CBWA is the trade association for the bottled water industry in Canada. Our members produce and distribute about 85 per cent of the bottled water sold in Canada.

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