

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
March 18, 2008

Canadian Students Mark World Water Day by Turning Back to the Tap Bottled Water Free Zones Established Across Canada

OTTAWA—The Polaris Institute, the Sierra Youth Coalition, and the Canadian Federation of Students are uniting to launch a campaign to raise awareness about corporate control over public water systems. Guelph Students for Environmental Change is leading the campaign at the University of Guelph.

“The ultimate goal of this campaign is to challenge the corporate control of water, as embodied by bottled water, one space at a time,” said Andrea Harden, a bottled water campaigner with the Polaris Institute. In this regard, students at the University of Guelph are approaching individual student groups, councils and faculty departments to sign a pledge removing the offer of bottled water during their respective events, meetings, and if applicable, halting their sale of bottled water. Ultimately, we would like the University Administration to encourage alternatives to the use of bottled water. The list of endorsers will be used to show the wide ranging support on campus. Besides the pledges, we are working toward frosh week (Orientation week) being bottled water free.

Students across Canada have chosen World Water Day (WWD) as a key public event for the campaign launch because the day has become increasingly commercialized. Faced with rising opposition, the bottled water industry has attempted to use WWD to promote their social responsibility campaigns and wash away their image as major private water-takers promoting environmentally destructive products. By participating in the official launch of this campaign, Canadian students are helping to bring WWD back to its roots.

“By engaging their campuses to establish bottled water free zones, students are using their power to challenge the privatization of one of our most basic human rights, water, and showing their commitment to making sustainability a core value of their campus communities,” said Monique Woolnough, Ontario Sustainable Campuses Coordinator.

Bottled water free zones are created when policies are put into place ending the sale and distribution of bottled water and steps are taken to encourage the consumption of tap water and raise awareness about the problems with the bottle water industry. This includes exposing the negative environmental and social impacts of bottled water. Environmental impacts include the use of fossil fuels to make plastic bottles, the release of toxic chemicals during the production of the bottles, contributing to global warming in the transportation of bottled water and increasing plastic waste. Social impacts include using manipulative marketing campaigns to undermine confidence in tap water and public water systems. The bottled water industry has

been so successful that people pay more for a litre of bottled water than they pay for a litre of gasoline.

“Students are at the forefront of the fight against the privatization of public resources,” said Amanda Aziz, National Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students. “Establishing bottled water free zones is an easy and effective way of resisting water privatization and promoting sustainable alternatives.”

In addition to creating bottled water free zones, several Canadian college and university campuses will feature water awareness activities; University of Guelph will initiate the celebrations Wednesday, March 19th with a Walk for Water, followed by a lecture from Robert Fox, executive director of Oxfam Canada. The Critical Knowledge Collective will feature a documentary screening of *Thirst* and lecture by Mike Nagy, Thursday evening. Bridging with community collaboration, citizens of Guelph can join a family friendly water awareness rally downtown this Saturday. The following Wednesday will entail student and community group awareness tables in the University Centre, water taste testing, magic tricks, a residence petition competition and more. Formal public events will conclude with Environmental Commissioner of Ontario & Mayor of Guelph to speak at OPIRG's "Healthy Water, Healthy Growth, Healthy Guelph" event.

The Inside the Bottle campaign is a Polaris Institute project designed to stimulate citizen awareness about the bottled water industry. The Sierra Youth Coalition's Sustainable Campuses project aims to empower students to lead initiatives on their campuses toward greater social, ecological and economic sustainability through changes to campus operations, curricula and culture. The Canadian Federation of Students represents over one half million Canadian students and provides them with an effective and untied voice, provincially and nationally. Guelph Students for Environmental Change is a student group at the University of Guelph.

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For more information, contact:

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Monique Woolnough, Ontario Sustainable Campuses Coordinator, Sierra Youth Coalition: (416) 537-3616, (647) 637-7063, ontario@syc-cjs.org, www.syc-cjs.org/sustainable

Ian Boyko, Campaigns and Government Relations Coordinator, Canadian Federation of Students: (613) 261-7939, www.cfs-fcee.ca/sustainability

Successes at the University of Guelph

List of entities having signed the pledge:

- College of Biological Science-Student Council
- Graduate Engineering Society
- NDP Youth, Guelph
- Engineers Without Borders, (EWB)
- Ontario Public Interest Research Group, (OPIRG- Guelph)
- The Peak, magazine on campus
- Guelph Engineering Society (undergraduate student club)
- Ecohouse (Campus residence)
- Environmental Sciences Student Executive
- CFRU 93.3 FM, campus radio station
- Guelph Students for Ethical Treatment of Animals (GSETA)
- Muslim Students Association

List of entities having signed the endorsement:

- School of Environmental Design and Rural Development (Landscape Architecture)

Other developments:

GSA (Graduate Student Association)

February 27th, the GSA passed the following MOTION:

- 1) B.I.R.T. the University of Guelph Graduate Students' Association (GSA) no longer provide bottled water at board meetings and Annual General Meetings
- 2) B.I.F.R.T. the GSA no longer provide bottled water at GSA sponsored events
- 3) the GSA work with university and community groups to raise awareness regarding the consequences of the privatization of water.

CSA (Central Student Association) (Undergraduate Student Union)

They agreed not to take any decision on the pledge currently until a framework was set up to visualize the implications the pledge would have on the CSA. Instead, they unanimously agreed to allow the committee responsible for writing new policies to write policies reflecting the pledge. These policies will later be reviewed and hopefully approved by the CSA board.

Orientation week (Frosh week)

A greening committee has made recommendations to the orientation week advisory board to become bottled water free.

Campus Bottled Water Free Zones

University of Ottawa, Ontario

Department of Geography
Women's Resource Centre
Student Federation of the University of Ottawa's office and meetings
Institute of the Environment
Department of Biology
Physical Resource Services
1848, undergraduate campus pub
Café Nostalgica, graduate pub
Oxfam University of Ottawa
Green Campus

University of PEI

Environmental and Sustainability Society

Concordia, Quebec

TAPthirst
QPIRG Concordia
Sustainable Concordia

Memorial University, Newfoundland

MUN Students for Sustainability Coalition

Brock University, Ontario

OPIRG-Brock

Guelph University, Ontario

College of Biological Science-Student Council
Graduate Engineering Society
NDP Youth, Guelph
Engineers Without Borders, (EWB)
Ontario Public Interest Research Group, (OPIRG- Guelph)
The Peak, magazine on campus
Guelph student for the ethical treatment of animals (GSETA)
Guelph Engineering Society (undergraduate student club)
Ecohouse (Campus residence)
Environmental Sciences Student Executive
CFRU 93.3 FM, campus radio station
Muslim Students Association

Sir Sandford Fleming College, Ontario

Sustainability Office, Frost campus

Waterloo University, Ontario

University of Waterloo Sustainability Project
Waterloo Public Interest Group

Trent University, Ontario

Trent Central Students' Association office

Ryerson University, Ontario

Working Students' Centre, Ryerson Students' union

University of Winnipeg

University of Winnipeg Students' Association's Soma Café
Ecological Males and Females In Action (EcoMAFIA)

University of Manitoba

University of Manitoba Students' Union office

Langara College, BC

Langara College Students' Association office

Queen's University, Ontario

Tea Room

Thompson Rivers University, BC

Tru Eco Committee

George Brown College, Ontario

Student association and faculty environmental group are considering a resolution to become zones later this month

Schedule of World Water Day Festivities within Guelph Campus and Community

Wednesday, 19th, 2008

Oxfam@Guelph: Water Justice, are collaborating with WaterCan for a Walk for Water (fundraiser for a project in Kenya) and followed by a lecture from Robert Fox, executive director of Oxfam Canada.

This is the schedule of events:

5.00 Registration in UC 103

5.30 Walk begins!

7.00 Return to UC 103 for free food and drinks

7.15 Keynote speaker, Executive Director of Oxfam Canada, Robert Fox

Visit www.uoguelph.ca/~watercan for route map and event details.

Pledge forms available by emailing watercan@uoguelph.ca or in the CSA Office (2nd floor UC)

Thursday, 20th, 2008

Critical Knowledge Collective is organizing a documentary screening of *Thirst* followed by a lecture from Mike Nagy, relating the film to local water issues.

University Centre, Rm 103 at 5:30pm

Saturday, 22nd, 2008

SAVE OUR WATER Rally

St. George's Square, Wyndham Street, Guelph

12 noon - 1pm

Join us for this family friendly water awareness rally featuring:

- Local politicians
- Community environmental groups
- Guest speakers
- James Gordon and The Funky Mamas performing!

Wear blue for water!

Contact Kathie Lamie for more information: kathie77ash2002@yahoo.ca

Wednesday, 26th, 2008

Tabling in the University Centre

- Oxfam, Watercan, OPIRG-SAS [coca cola connection], OPIRG- Speed River Project, GSEC-TapIn, Circus Club, Magic Club [water magic tricks], Guelph Campus Greens, NDP-Party, Engineers Without Borders (EWB), Wellington Water Watchers, Council of Canadians
- Taste testing
- Laptop available for signing online petition
- Residence Petition Competition!

contact Silvie Fojtik: watersustained@gmail.com

Sunday, 30th, 2008

Environmental Commissioner of Ontario & Mayor of Guelph to speak at OPIRG's "Healthy Water, Healthy Growth, Healthy Guelph" event

OPIRG-Guelph will host a FREE panel and community discussion at the Arboretum on the University of Guelph campus from 1-4pm.

For more details visit <http://www.opirgguelph.org/>

contact: opirg@uoguelph.ca