



The United States Conference of Mayors

1620 Eye Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20006
Phone (202) 293-7330 • Fax (202) 293-2352
E-mail: info@usmayors.org URL: usmayors.org

For Immediate Release
May 1, 2008

Contact: Elena Temple
202-861-6719/etemple@usmayors.org

The U.S. Conference of Mayors Reviews Importance of Municipal Water

Facing Critical Water Infrastructure Cost Needs the Nation's Major Cities Investigate the Economic and Health Benefits of Public Investment in Clean Water

New York City, NY – The U.S. Conference of Mayors convened a joint meeting of the Mayors Water Council and the Municipal Waste Management Association, an environmental affiliate of the Conference, to examine new information on the economic and public health benefits from local government investment in municipal water and sewer infrastructure and services. Albuquerque (NM) Mayor Martin Chávez, and Fayetteville (AR) Mayor Dan Coody, Co-Chairs of the Mayors Water Council, were joined by Cuyahoga Falls (OH) Mayor Don Robart in leading the discussion. The Mayors assembled a series of expert panels including city environmental, sanitation and water Commissioners, technical water experts and industry leaders and technical consultants representing the bottled water industry.

The meeting was initiated in response to a resolution adopted in June of 2007 at the 75th Annual Meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors in Los Angeles. The Resolution, entitled- The Importance of Municipal Water, directed the Conference of Mayors to compile information on the importance of local government investment in municipal water and sewer; and to examine the impact of bottled water on the municipal solid waste stream.

The Cadmus Group Inc., was retained by the Mayors Water Council to prepare a White Paper on the economic impact of local investment in water and sewer infrastructure and services. G. Tracy Mehan III of The Cadmus Group reported preliminary findings at the meeting. Based on preliminary findings from their literature search Mehan stated that while estimation methods have changed over time, investing in drinking water and sewer systems brings positive returns. Those returns, he said, depend on the type and amount of infrastructure already in place. Mehan reported that, in general, a \$1 increase in local spending on water and sewer infrastructure, operations and maintenance increases total economic activity by as much as \$2.62. Further, he stated that adding 1 job in water and sewer can lead to 3.68 jobs in the national economy to support the water or sewer related job.

Conference staff cited a Harvard University study (Cutler and Miller, *Demography*, 2005) that reported significant public health benefits from municipal investment in clean water technologies including filtration and chlorination. The Harvard researchers estimate that for every \$1 invested in clean water technology major urban centers achieve from \$7 to \$40 return in avoided health care costs; primarily from the near eradication of waterborne infectious diseases.

A growing number of cities such as San Francisco, Albuquerque, Minneapolis, Seattle, etc. have adopted bans on purchase of single-serve bottled water by their city departments since 2007. Some cities have expressed concern over the premium cost that city budgets incur when they purchase bottled water. Conference research indicates that purchasing some of the cheapest bottled water from city retailers (mostly grocery stores) can cost from 1,000 to over 4,000 times per unit volume than municipal tap water, (see Table attached). Other concerns include impacts on the solid waste stream and recycling efforts. (BRETT- can you put in a few sentences here?)

In order to ensure that the information presented in the meeting was balanced, representatives from the American Beverage Association and the International Bottled Water Association offered new information on industry efforts to reduce the amount of materials used in plastic water bottles, reductions in the amount of energy spent to produce bottled water and water conservation in bottled water production processes.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors will convene the 76th Annual Meeting in Miami the week of June 22. The research and discussions at the New York City meeting will be considered in Miami.

A Price Comparison Between Municipal Tap Water and Commercial Bottled Water

City, State	Average Residential Tap Water Rate (\$ Per 1000 gallons)	Average Residential Tap Water Rate (\$ Per Ounce)	Grocery Purchase of Single-Serve Bottled Water * (\$ Per Ounce)	How Many Times More Does Bottled Water Cost Than Tap Water?
Fayetteville, AR	2.81	0.000022	0.023	1,045.45
Phoenix, AZ	2.73	0.000021	0.028	1,333.33
Los Angeles, CA	2.39	0.000019	0.030	1,578.95
San Diego, CA	3.14	0.000025	0.030	1,200.00
San Francisco, CA	2.79	0.000022	0.030	1,363.64
San Jose, CA	1.34	0.000010	0.035	3,181.82
Philadelphia, PA	2.18	0.000017	0.030	1,764.71
San Antonio, TX	1.70	0.000013	0.033	2,538.46
Chicago, IL	1.33	0.000010	0.010	1,000.00
Urbana, IL	1.31	0.000010	0.042	4,200.00
Detroit, MI	1.66	0.000013	0.018	1,384.62
Minneapolis, MN	3.53	0.000028	0.111	3,994.00
Albuquerque, NM	1.36	0.000011	0.013	1,181.82
New York City, NY	2.70	0.000021	0.116	4,136.90
Cuyahoga Falls, OH	2.38	0.000019	0.025	1,315.79
Dallas, TX	3.06	0.000024	0.049	2,041.67
Houston, TX	2.88	0.000023	0.031	1,347.83
Seattle, WA	3.99	0.000031	0.083	2,677.42

* Based on 12 ounce, 16.9 ounce and 20 ounce single-serve containers

Source: The United States Conference of Mayors, May 1, 2008, Washington, DC