

School Sisters of Notre Dame
Atlantic-Midwest Province



Water

Blue Communities

AMSSND Blue Communities Project

The AM Water Committee Invites All AMSSNDs to Join the Blue Communities Project.

As an initiative of The Council of Canadians, the Blue Communities Project* provides us with a way to deepen our commitment to support water's availability and sustainability. When you read through the information in this resource, we invite you, as a local community or a province member, to join the Blue Communities Project.

"Even as the quality of available water is constantly diminishing, in some places there is a growing tendency, despite its scarcity, to privatize this resource, turning it into a commodity subject to the laws of the market."

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*

How can you participate in the Blue Communities Project?

You begin by adopting the framework of a water commons.

While not banning bottled drinking water in all situations, those who become part of the Blue Communities Project regard water as part of 'the commons,' which has been described as "those things to which we have rights just by being a member of the human family: the air we breathe, fresh water we drink, the seas, forests and mountains, the genetic heritage through which all life is transmitted, the diversity of life itself."

As participants in the Blue Community Project you agree to

1. **Recognize** water and sanitation as human rights.
2. **Promote** the use of tap water at Province facilities, communities, ministries and events.
3. **Educate** community members, staff, colleagues, and partners to avoid using bottled water when potable water is available.
4. **Uphold** a 'water commons' framework in which water is shared and is the responsibility of all.
5. **Urge our governments** to adopt sustainable water policies that give particular attention to the rights of marginalized groups, communities, and individuals.

Next Steps

- Reflect on the invitation and the agreements involved in becoming a member of the AMSSND Blue Communities Project.
- Discuss this invitation with your local community and other friends.
- Inform the Director of the Province JPIC office by email, aflaherty@amssnd.org, by March 22, World water Day, if you or your community intends to join the Blue Communities Project. Your participation will be indicated on our province webpage dedicated to the Blue Communities Project.
- Celebrate your commitment with the recommended prayer and ritual for Blue Communities which will be sent to you by the Water Committee of the province.

Some Facts about Tap Water vs. Bottled Water



“No one should think that bottled water is better regulated, better protected, or safer than tap.”
Eric Goldstein, Director of NYC Environmental Resources Defense Council

- More than 25% of bottled water comes from the municipal water supply – glorified tap water – at a thousand-fold increase in price.
- 3-5 liters of water are needed to produce 1 liter of bottled water.
- Making bottled water to meet demands in Canada and in the United States uses millions of barrels of oil annually. This does not include oil used for transportation of the bottled water. These fossil fuels emitted into the atmosphere contribute to the greenhouse gases which create climate change and global warming.
- In the United States, public water is regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which requires multiple daily tests for bacteria and makes the results available to the public. Bottled water is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which only requires weekly testing and does not share its findings with the EPA, nor the public.
- In Canada, tap water is tested continuously during and after treatment. Bottled water is regulated as a food product under the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Water bottling plants are inspected about once every 3 years.
- Americans used about 50 billion plastic water bottles last year; 38 billion are not recycled.
- Canadian landfills cannot support bottled water. 50% of bottles used in Toronto get recycled.

Suggestions

Consider using water pitcher filters. 240 gallons of water a year are filtered for about \$.19 a day; this includes the cost of the pitcher and 5 replacement filters. The yearly cost is \$70.

BPA free reusable water bottles are a great alternative to commercially bottled water. Faucet filtration systems for about 20-30 dollars to purchase.

The Water Committee of the Atlantic-Midwest Province, urges every sister to stop using bottled water in all but emergency circumstances. This practice is a way of living out the **Directional Statement from the 24th General Chapter** which reads in part: “We educate, advocate, and act in collaboration with others for the dignity of life and the care of all creation.”

* <https://canadians.org/bluecommunities>