Drinking Water Policy

BC Water Facts
- 3220 water systems in BC.
- 90% of population served by 96 systems.
- 10% of population served by 3224 systems.
- Approximately 63 000 private wells.

Study to date:
- Survey first piloted at the University of Calgary in the spring of 2003, students surveyed on their use of bottled water.
- Survey refined and conducted at Simon Fraser University in the summer 2003.
- In fall 2003 over 1000 surveys conducted by SFU students as part of a Communications Policy & Research Methods course.
- In March of 2004, the results from the survey as well as an interactive poster were presented at the Applied Sciences Institute Exchange 2004.

What we found.

Mixed messages

Chart 1A: Vancouver survey—% that would drink tap water in:

- Water is treated as required
- Most water is safe
- and safe water is a public good
- Water treatment responsibility trickle down to the end user?
- New drinking water policies have laid higher levels of responsibility on small water system operators/purveyors raising issues of costs, liability and control.

Policy Issues
- What is a human right, a public good, a commodity or three?
- Water is a lifestyle issue?
- Is water a lifestyle issue?
- Water is treated as required.
- Sanitary (toilets)
- Is water a public good?
- Laundry
- Rural
- Is there a policy-perception-disconnect?
- How Much Water Do We Need?
- Where do you want potable water?
- Toilets
- on toilet
- Kitchen
- How Many Water Do We Need?
- The average consumption in the GVRD is over 300 litres per person per day.
- In the developing world the average person uses 10 litres per day.

Policy Issues
- Is water a human right, a public good, a commodity or three?
- Canadian water systems deliver cheap, almost unlimited supplies of water, with minimal treatment (usually simple filtration and chlorination, is this sustainable?)
- The policy environment post-Walkerton is changing rapidly and most provinces are now introducing higher standards.
- New drinking water policies have laid higher levels of responsibility on small water system operators/surveyors raising issues of costs, liability and control.

The Future of Water Delivery
- A) Continue to watch the water that flow to users
- All water is safe
- and safe water is a public good
- BUT
- Need to examine how to reduce consumption
- Need major capital spending on existing systems and in new alternative technologies.
- B) Do not deliver potable water, but use point of use treatment or alternative delivery systems (eg bottled water)
- Water becomes a commodity
- Water is treated as required
- BUT
- Will the public accept the delivery of non-potable water?
- What are public attitudes towards the use of bottled water?
- Could municipalities sell and bottle their own water?
- Is water a lifestyle issue?
- Permit variable delivery systems with jurisdictions:
- Allows flexibility in policy making and system spending
- BUT
- Will the public accept private delivery of potable water?
- If under 20% of water coming to a house is used for drinking, then should a separate drinking water line be run?What do you want potable water?

Water News
- Vancouver Tap Water or Tap Water on Tap?
- Do you like the taste of tap water?
- Vancouver Tap Water or Tap Water on Tap?
- How Much Water Do We Need?
- Where do you want potable water?
- How Many Water Do We Need?
- The average consumption in the GVRD is over 300 litres per person per day.
- In the developing world the average person uses 10 litres per day.

Future Research
- As water is increasingly seen as a scarce resource more citizens are concerned about how we use, or misuse our supply. We need to raise awareness, but a broader survey would provide data more reflective of all Canadien's attitudes. A website is also planned which will facilitate online data collection and gathering to enable national co-ordination of local surveys, but issues of accuracy and jurisdictional co-operation remain. This could also serve as a clearing house and forum for policy issues related to drinking water.
- More investigation is also needed on: public-private initiatives for water supply and clearing house and forum for policy issues related to drinking water.

Where Does all our water go?
- Clothes Washers—25%
- Showers—14%
- Toilets—30%
- Leaks—10%
- Baths—6%
- Dishwashers—2%
- Other—1%

Gender & Taste

Gender & Trust

Gender & Small bottles

Why buy – Vancouver

Why buy – Calgary

March 29, 2004

The BC Catholic, by Royson James

February 6, 2004 by Sonia Shah

September 5, 2001

Toronto Star,

Sanitary (toilets)

Laundry

Kitchen

5%

100

150

200

250

300

0

45%

36%

66%

42%

64%

34.2%

71.7%

5%

30%

30%

150

100

150

250

0

17.7%

17.7%

17.7%

17.7%