

When it comes to safety, tap water is the clear choice

We live in a world where over a billion people are without access to safe, clean drinking water and an estimated three million people die annually from preventable waterborne disease. Yet, in Hampton Roads, we can drink from any public tap with the highest level of confidence, never having to think twice about the quality of the product that comes out of our taps.

When it comes to safety, tap water is the clear choice. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires routine testing of tap water to ensure it is safe for everyone to drink. Here in Hampton Roads, our water has always met or exceeded EPA standards for safe drinking water. In many ways, EPA's standards for tap water are more stringent than the Food and Drug Administration's standards for bottled water. In fact, a third of all bottled water in the U.S. is actually just filtered tap water.

The oil and energy required for the production and distribution of bottled water is staggering. In the United States we buy more than two billion bottles of water each month, and less than 25 percent of those bottles actually get recycled. So why do we spend so much money on bottled water that costs thousands of times more than tap water? You can pay a dollar or more for a bottle of water, or for that same dollar, you could refill a sports bottle over 1,000 times.

It's time we take back the tap to protect our wallets, our health and our community. What can you do? Prevent pollution and decrease waste by choosing tap over bottled water. Grab a reusable bottle on your way out the door to reduce your reliance on bottled alternatives. And show your appreciation for the value and vital role of drinking water by supporting investment in public infrastructure so we can continue to enjoy clean, safe, affordable tap water for generations to come. For more info on the benefits of tap water, visit askHRgreen.org, your go-to source for all things green in Hampton Roads.