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The Impact of Bottled Water on the Environment and the Water Supply

Bottled water is a serious problem in the current day and age. Many people turn to bottled water at the movies, in the park, or even in schools. However, there are misconceptions that this is a healthier alternative to other kinds of water, or better for the environment as a whole. Some believe it even protects the global water supply. This is just not the truth. Bottled water has a globally negative impact on the environment and the water supply.

Bottled water does severe damage to the earth's environment. The bottles themselves are made from non-renewable plastics from fossil fuels, and in the United States about 70-75% of these bottles do not get recycled. Some bottles actually get "down-cycled", meaning the bottles are shipped to other countries to be turned into goods besides water bottles or similar plastics. This has some very negative effects on the environment, as fossil fuels are becoming scarce. Increasing amounts of water bottles means quickly decreasing amounts of fossil fuels and important non-renewable plastics. Shipping, creating, and down-cycling water bottles uses very large amounts of energy, which can damage and pollute the air. Down-cycling creates problem on its own, as companies will continue to have to use fossil fuels to make bottles, instead of using the small amounts of recycled plastics, and it creates a way for plastics to easily get wasted if they are not used completely in the process.

Water bottles can also be harmful to humans in local environments. Studies show that about 20% of bottled water contains harmful compounds that do not match the World Health Organization's guidelines. It is shown that many bottled waters lack necessary minerals like potassium and calcium that the human body needs to function properly. This raises the question of what people are drinking regularly, and what long-term effects it might have on the human environment. One of the biggest impacts of the water, itself, however, is that it is being taken from areas of land that are drying out. Many companies get the water from municipal supplies and springs, but these springs will not last forever. They collect water from places like California, which are famous for heavy droughts. This could have a serious impact on the environment in the very near future, as fewer water supplies will be able to provide sufficient amounts of liquid for locals, and environments around the world will become dryer and dryer. This not only affects humans, but also many ecosystems around the world that depend on this water for life to thrive.

Bottling water is endangering water itself. Along with drying out drought-ridden places like California, bottled water may be affecting the water cycle. This cycle requires the precipitation and evaporation of water from the atmosphere, to the ground, and back into the atmosphere. Bottling water, however, could interrupt this integral and irreplaceable cycle. After water is taken and bottled, there is no way to return it to the cycle. This interruption effects

varying environments and ecosystems, as water is needed for agriculture, drinking and living conditions for plants and animals, such as fish and frogs, which reside primarily in and around water sources. Bottling and preventing the evaporation of ground water means that when it is time to rain or renew water supplies, there may not be enough. This could lead to unusable and dying crops, sick and thirsty livestock and destroyed ecosystems.

Bottled water negatively impacts the global environments as well as its water supply. Bottles use non-renewable fossil fuels, many of which are thrown away or down-cycled without a second thought. Compounds in the water have the potential to diminish human health, as well as chemicals given off by plastic bottles themselves. Areas all around the world are drying up as companies take increasing amounts of water, and interrupt necessities of ecosystems like the water cycle. Bottling water is a serious problem all around the world, but humans can begin to take steps toward reducing its harmful impacts. Though bottled water can have disastrous effects, there is still hope for the earth's environment and water supplies.