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## Bottled water ban capped

By RENATO GANDIA, Sun Media

Ald. Joe Ceci's thirst for a bottled water ban won't get quenched any time soon after politicians capped a proposed elimination of the item on city properties.

In a 7-3 vote, the intergovernmental affairs committee shut down the motion to have city staff investigate the financial implications of banning bottled water.

"What are we going to do next, make everybody drink beer with a straw from a keg so we can save those bottles?" asked Ald. Jim Stevenson, who along with Mayor Dave Bronconnier and five other aldermen voted against starting a study on how to rid sales of bottled water.



"A better option is education, that we increase the amount of recycling of these bottles," Stevenson told reporters.

More than three weeks ago, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) passed a resolution asking cities and towns to phase out the sale and purchase of bottled water on municipal property.

Council members raised concerns ranging from eliminating a healthy drinking choice to the impact the move could have on contracts with suppliers.

"If we pick on water, we're saying perhaps we'd rather have you drink sugar-based drinks," Ald. Ric McIver said.

The public may think that the city is taking away a healthy choice, he added.

Ceci said he's not picking on water because the city has the best supply of the resource in the world.

"All I'm picking on is the fact that water gets moved around the city and the facilities and we've got good water coming out of the tap."

He also argued that about 40% of the single-use bottles end up in a landfill.

Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart says the current economic downturn is not the time to pick on a business such as a bottling company.

The city has two contracts with suppliers, one involves the purchase of coolers and bottled water for staff and the other is a deal with Coca-Cola, allowing the distributor exclusive rights to sell beverages at city facilities, including Dasani bottled water.

The contract with the pop maker expires in 2012.

Although the motion died at the committee, it can go back to council, where five other aldermen can have a say on the controversial issue later this month.

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