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Letters to the Editor
San Francisco Chronicle
901 Mission St.
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Editor:

Thanks for drawing attention to the growing problem of plastic water bottle waste (“State trying to stem tide of plastic water bottles”, by Jane Kay, May 30, 2003). Unfortunately, the focus was on the least of the problems these containers pose – bottles that end up in landfills and incinerators. The fact that 9 out of 10 plastic water bottles end up in the trash, (30 million a day nationwide) is disturbing, especially when they could have been recycled. But even if all of the water bottles sold were recycled into other products, a more serious problem would remain. Replacing the plastic water bottles trashed each year with new bottles made from virgin resources consumes energy, and pollutes air, land and water.

Supplying thirsty Americans with water-bottles-to-go this year will consume more than 1.5 million barrels of oil -- enough energy to generate electricity for more than 250 thousand homes for a year. Those who want to “hydrate”, and protect the environment should refill the same bottle with filtered tap water (that’s what they get when they buy Dasani and Aquafina. For every plastic bottle that’s refilled 10 times, nine new plastic bottles don’t have to be made, saving resources and reducing pollution.

Sincerely,

Pat Franklin
Executive Director