Should plastic water bottles be banned from all city properties and public schools? NO - TEAM B - You are AGAINST this bill

NYC Council has introduced a legislation, Int 0846-2018 - prohibiting the sale or distribution of single use water bottles on city property (schools are not included).
- This bill would apply both to vendors operating on city property, such as parks or city streets, and large scale events where the city grants the event sponsor reliable access to on-site water connections.
- Additionally, the bill would prohibit the use of city funds to purchase single use water bottles.

OVERVIEW - THE SINGLE-USE PLASTIC CRISIS
“Nearly every piece of plastic begins as a fossil fuel and greenhouse gases are emitted at each...stage of the plastic lifecycle: 1) fossil fuel extraction and transport, 2) plastic refining and manufacture, 3) managing plastic waste, and 4) plastic’s ongoing impact once it reaches our oceans, waterways, and landscape. In the next 10 years alone, emissions from the plastics lifecycle could reach 1.34 gigatons [billion tons of CO2e] per year – equivalent to the emissions from more than 295 500MW coal-fired power plants operating at full capacity.” (Plastic & Health: The Hidden Costs of a Plastic Planet, Center for International Environmental Law and partners, May 2019)

- Each year, an estimated 18 billion pounds of plastic waste enters the world’s ocean from coastal regions. That’s about equivalent to five grocery bags of plastic trash piled up on every foot of coastline on the planet. (Planet or Plastic, National Geographic)
- Plastic floating in the ocean kills one million birds and more than 100,000 marine mammals every year, according to the UK government.
- Approximately 80% of marine debris originates from land and 89% of ocean trash comes from single-use plastics. (Eunomia and Smithsonian)
- As many as 51 trillion microplastic particles – 500 times more than stars in our galaxy – litter our seas, seriously threatening marine wildlife. (United Nations Environmental Program)
- The top 10 litter items collected during International Coastal Cleanup 2017 were all plastic, including cigarette butts, food wrappers, bottles & caps, straws, plastic bags. (Ocean Conservancy)

We use way too many plastic bottles
- Humans purchase a million plastic bottles every minute of every day, 91% are not recycled. (Forbes)
- Americans consumed 13.7 billion gallons of bottled water in 2017 - more than any other beverage by volume - boosting an industry worth $18.5 billion.” (beveragemarketing.com)

Over 99% of plastics are derived from fossil fuels
- It takes 17 million barrels of oil to make enough water bottles for just American consumption, not including the transportation of bottles (mannahydration.com)
- “One of the most inexpensive ways to make plastic is through “cracking.” When land is fracked to produce fossil fuels, ethane gas is produced as a byproduct. Cracking plants (aka, “crackers”) convert ethane to ethylene, which is used to make polyethylene plastic.” (5Gyres.org)

Plastic bottles are also made from toxic chemicals
- Plastic bottles are made with chemicals that are dangerous to human health and create pollution.
- BPA and other chemicals used to make plastic can affect human hormones; they get released when plastic heats up, such as when exposed to sunlight.

Other environmental impacts
- It takes more water to produce a plastic bottle than the amount packaged inside.
- It takes 47 million gallons of oil to transport the trillions of gallons of bottled water that Americans drink each year. That’s the equivalent of the exhaust output of about 100,000 cars and 1 billion pounds of carbon dioxide. (mannahydration.com)
THE DEBATE – “AGAINST” THE BAN
Tap water may NOT be healthier than bottled water

- Tap water doesn’t always taste as good.
- American cities, such as Flint, MI, have had serious lead contamination issues. How can we trust our government, especially during this time when many federal environmental regulations are being weakened?
- Public water fountains, such as in parks, may not have been tested. There’s no easy way to tell which water fountains have been tested.
- NYC water is good, ranking #13 among 100 cities, but Boston’s water ranks #1. (Environmental Working Group)
- NYC has many old buildings and pipes may leach lead into drinking water. (tappwater.co/us)
- Microplastics were found in all samples of tap and bottled water in NY. (tappwater.co/us)
- More than one million Californians are exposed to unsafe water each year, according to public health officials. (NY Times, 2019) How can we be sure that all of NY’s drinking water is safe?

Accessing good drinking water in schools is a problem

- In New York, testing recently revealed that at least 82 percent of the nearly 5,000 public schools have drinking water lead levels that exceed the state action level of 15 parts per billion (NRDC.org, 2018)
- Many public school buildings do not have enough working water fountains.
- Students may not have enough time to get to the 1 or 2 working water fountains or refill stations.
- Not all school cafeterias have water fountains or water jets provided in the cafeteria.
- Refill stations are expensive to install and it’s hard to find the funding.
- Refill stations need to have the filters replaced regularly, but often there is no money for this.

A ban will disproportionately affect low-income New Yorkers

- Due to Climate Emergency, there are more higher temperature days, which put the elderly and poor at a higher risk of illness and death. Why would we want to make it harder for people to have access to water on these dangerously hot days?
- Reusable water bottles are expensive & the city cannot expect everyone to be able to afford one.
- People often lose their reusable water bottle and may not have one with them when they need it.
- Many small businesses and street vendors struggle to stay in business and a government ban can be costly and may be the tipping point, forcing some to go out of business.

A ban would restrict consumer access to a healthy beverage option

- A survey by Harris Poll for the International Bottled Water Association found that 93% of Americans think "bottled water should be available wherever drinks are sold," with 31% saying that they only, or mostly only, drink bottled water. (International Bottled Water Association)
- Banning bottled water would encourage people to go back to buying unhealthy, sugar-laden carbonated sodas. (www.procon.org)

CASE STUDIES

- “The Houston Zoo eliminated single-use plastic water bottles in 2017, reducing plastic waste by nearly 300,000 water bottles annually. “Guests can fill up at water stations; purchase pre-filled, reusable aluminum water bottles; or purchase 100% recyclable paper-based water bottles.”
- San Francisco recently banned the sale of plastic bottles on city-owned properties Additionally, government agencies may not purchase bottled water.
- In 2013 The University of Vermont (UVM) in Burlington became the first public college in the United States to enact a plastic water bottle ban. As of late 2016, 82 high schools, colleges and universities across the world have implemented bottled water bans on their campuses. ("Map of Campaigns I Ban the Bottle")