

Oregon environmental study finds tap water trounces bottled water

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Drink me. Here is the view of **Bull Run Lake** with Mt. Hood in the background. Even in a best-case scenario, drinking bottled water boosts greenhouse gas emissions 46 times more than drinking water from the tap, an analysis from Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality concludes.

DEQ's [study](#) examined the "life-cycle" environmental costs of bottled water versus tap water, pitting the production, packaging and transportation of bottled water against drinking tap water from reusable bottles or cups.

Among the conclusions:

- Recycling water bottles has measurable but moderate environmental benefits. Recycling a typical water bottle reduces energy consumption by 24 percent and greenhouse gas emissions by 16 percent versus throwing the bottle away.
- Consuming tap water in a reusable bottle cuts energy consumption by 85 percent and greenhouse gases by 79 percent

compared to drinking the same amount of bottled water and throwing the bottle away, even if the reusable bottle is washed frequently in an inefficient dishwasher.

- The best performing bottled water scenario, using and recycling a light-weighted bottle that's not available in Oregon yet, has global warming effects 46 times greater than the best-performing tap-water scenario.
- Consumers buying bottled water should look for the thinnest-walled bottles using the least plastic and purchase water that's bottled locally. The environmental costs rise when water is shipped long distances, from Maine, France or Fiji, for example.

Recycling water bottles is good, David Allaway, DEQ's solid waste senior policy analyst, said in a news release. But it's better to avoid bottled water in the first place.

-- [Scott Learn](#)