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London mayor launches blitz on bottled water



Tue Feb 19, 7:02 PM ET

LONDON (AFP) - [London Mayor Ken Livingstone](#) on Tuesday launched a blitz against bottled mineral water, urging restaurant customers in the British capital to ask for tap water to help the environment.

Livingstone said tap water was not only cheaper but also comes without the heavy carbon footprint of transporting bottled varieties by road and often vast distances by air from countries as far away as [Fiji](#) and [New Zealand](#).

"People should be encouraged to ask and feel confident they can ask in restaurants for tap water, rather than have to pay through the nose for bottled water," he told his weekly news conference.

The initiative, backed by utility Thames Water and environmental groups, follows recent comments from environment minister Phil Woolas on the two-billion-pound (2.6-billion-euro, 3.9-billion-dollar) a year industry.

Woolas told a [BBC television documentary](#) that "it borders on morally being unacceptable" for Britons to spend so much on mineral water when there was a [worldwide water shortage](#) and pure drinking water was readily available.

[Jenny Jones](#), a Green Party representative on the London Assembly, said: "This is another step to making [London](#) a world city in fighting [climate change](#)."

Bottled water was "disastrous for the planet" because of its use of plastics, the "ludicrous" distances it was often transported and Britain's "appalling" level of recycling of bottles after use, she added.

According to industry body the Bottled Water Information Office, the average Briton drinks 37.6 litres of bottled water each year, with six million litres drunk every day.

But it said bottled water accounts for only 0.03 percent of Britain's total carbon emissions, while the industry was committed to more environmentally friendly methods of production, transport and containers.

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