

Global Warming and the Environmental Impact of Poland Spring's Water Bottling Operations

With only a one degree increase in worldwide temperature from greenhouse gases, we are already experiencing longer growing seasons, shrinking continental glaciers, melting polar ice caps, eroding shorelines, and the northward spread of insect pests, defoliating many western forests and exposing humans to threats from ticks and disease carrying mosquitoes.

With multiple degree temperature increases, which are a certainty if we do not take dramatic steps to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, we will witness the extinction of numerous Pacific island nations, extensive flooding along the east coast of the United States, the complete loss of the Arctic ice cap during the summer seasons, weather events of extraordinary severity, and potentially the complete disruption of the Gulf Stream current which stabilizes climates for Europe and much of the world.

Poland Spring claims it is a “clean” industry, but that statement is completely contrary to the evidence. Water bottling may not be a traditional “smokestack industry,” but its contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and global warming is huge, and created in the following ways:

1. When plastic water bottles are manufactured. Last year Americans consumed more than 8 billion gallons of bottled water. Just making the bottles consumed 1 ½ million barrels of oil, and created 2 ½ million tons of carbon dioxide, a potent greenhouse gas that is primarily responsible for rising temperatures. (Even the safety of the plastic, polyethylene terephthalate, used to make the bottles, is coming under increasing scrutiny because of reports that chemicals leach into the contents of the bottle.)
2. When plastic water bottles are transported. Moving water bottles around the country adds another 1-2 million tons of carbon dioxide, to say nothing of the noxious ground level pollution caused by the combustion of diesel fuel. Overseas shipping further multiplies the carbon dioxide emissions.
3. When plastic water bottles are landfilled or incinerated. With incineration, a wide array of pollutants as well as carbon dioxide are spewed into the atmosphere, again contributing to both ground level pollution and carbon dioxide emissions that lead to global warming. Unfortunately, only about 10 percent of water bottles, worldwide, are recycled.

The cumulative impact of these manufacturing, transportation, and disposal processes is such that the bottling industry is a major contributor to global warming. As one energy consultant puts it, bottled water is an “energy intensive luxury” that the earth no longer can afford.

SAVE OUR WATER