



Date: November 14, 2023

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Author and title: Carmen Lopez, Program Analyst I; Erin Brewster, Sustainability Program Manager

Title: Water Bottle Filling Stations Grant Guidelines

Jen Callaway, Town Manager

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**Recommended Action:** Approve grant guidelines for water bottle filling stations in Truckee.

**Discussion:**

**I. Background**

At the first reading of the Town's Single-Use Foodware Ordinance on October 25, 2022, Council members indicated there was interest in exploring a single-use plastic water bottle ban, following South Lake Tahoe's adoption of a similar ordinance. To gather input on potential policies and programs to reduce the use of single-use bottles, Town staff convened a stakeholder advisory group including representatives from local businesses, special events, healthcare, emergency operations, and education. Additionally, Town staff held a community workshop and developed a survey for residents, visitors, and businesses. Based on the input received, staff developed recommendations for an ordinance and supporting programs to reduce the use of single-use plastic water bottles in Truckee. These recommendations support one of Truckee Town Council's priorities to "reduce greenhouse gas emissions and become a leader in environmental sustainability" and Truckee's Climate Action Plan goals to minimize embedded carbon emissions, reduce overall consumption, and discourage single-use items.

On May 23, 2023, Staff presented the following single-use water bottle policy recommendations, which were approved by Town Council:

1. Develop a comprehensive outreach and incentive program to support a reduction in use of single-use bottles, promote a shift to reusable water bottles, and incentivize installation of additional refill stations in the community
2. Prohibit the sale and commercial distribution of water packaged in single-use plastic bottles or paper cartons less than one gallon in volume
3. Include exemptions for emergencies, social services, healthcare, and other situations that may impact health and safety
4. Report back to Council at least one year after the effective date of implementation of the ordinance and outreach campaign, including impacts on residents and businesses
5. Investigate options to expand the ordinance to include other beverages in single-use plastic packaging and provide recommendations to Council for future consideration.

As directed by Town Council, staff are prioritizing development of an outreach campaign and water bottle filling station incentive program before bringing a proposed ordinance to Town Council. This will ensure that bottle filling stations are in place well before a ban takes effect, and that behavior change campaigns have a chance to establish a culture of reuse and community support for an eventual ban. Staff research into other single-use bottle bans indicated that a comprehensive outreach campaign, along with supporting infrastructure such as refill stations, is critical to the success of a ban and can mitigate unintended negative impacts. Currently, Keep Truckee Green Staff, with guidance from the Diversity

Equity and Inclusion Program Manager, are conducting follow-up surveys to better understand the barriers for residents and visitors in reducing use of single-use plastic water bottles. The results will allow staff to better craft an effective outreach campaign and supporting programs.

As proposed in the recommendations approved by Council, staff recommends a grant program to incentivize the installation of water bottle filling stations in the Town of Truckee. Under such a program, public and private agencies would be able to apply for a grant to partially cover the costs of installing a filling station to provide tap water to the public free of charge. According to a survey conducted by the Keep Truckee Green Team, 72.16% of residents and 87.18% of visitors of Truckee responded that improved access to publicly accessible tap water, such as water bottle filling stations, would reduce their use of single-use plastic water bottles. The refill station grant program and public outreach campaign would be the first step to eventually banning single-use plastic water bottles under a gallon in size by shifting the culture in Truckee to one of reuse.

## **II. TWSA Filling Station Grant Program**

The proposed grant program is based on the successful Tahoe Water Suppliers Association (TWSA)/Tahoe Fund Water Bottle Filling Station Grant Program. As part of the regional Drink Tahoe Tap campaign, the TWSA developed this grant program to encourage the installation of more water bottle filling stations in the Tahoe Basin. This program was launched in August 2020 with a total of \$20,000 in funding. Both public agencies and private businesses are eligible to receive a grant of up to 50% of the cost of a filling station, as long as that filling station is available to the public free of charge. As of spring 2023, the program has funded installation of approximately 20 stations in both indoor and outdoor locations within the TWSA service area. Some of the outdoor filling stations include frost-free valves that allow them to operate year-round. Approximately 40% of the stations were installed at facilities owned by public agencies, while 60% are in privately-owned facilities that provide public access to the refill stations.

TWSA recently renewed this grant program with higher funding amounts of up to \$2,500 per station to help cover the higher cost of outdoor stations. Staff recommend matching the TWSA grant program criteria, including the updated funding amounts, to maintain regional consistency and leverage the success of this existing program.

## **III. Proposed Grant Guidelines**

The proposed grant program would reimburse 50% of the purchase price of a water bottle filling station, up to \$2500 per station. The cost of stations can range from \$700-\$1500 per indoor unit, and \$300-\$7000 per outdoor unit, not including the cost of installation. The \$13,000 allocated to this program in CIP 2309 would cover grants for at least 10 stations, assuming a mix of interior and exterior models. The program would be open to business, non-profits, and public agencies within the Town of Truckee. A maximum of 5 units could be funded per applicant, subject to funding availability. The program would be available on a first-come, first-served basis until funding is exhausted.

### Applicant Eligibility:

- Be located in the Town of Truckee
- Be a public facility (city facility, school, community center, park, recreation area, etc.) or private facility/business providing public access to fill station during standard business hours
- Fulfill application requirements

## **IV. Funding Breakdown**

CIP 2309 includes \$28,000 in funding over two years to support single-use bottle reduction measures, including \$13,000 for the proposed filling station grant program, as outlined in the 5-year CIP budget approved by Council in June 2023. The following table details the expected funding breakdown for these efforts:

<b>Single-Use Bottle Reduction</b>	<b>FY 23-24</b>	<b>FY 24-25</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Outreach & education	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
Reusable bottles, refill station map, misc. expenses	\$2,000	\$ -	\$2,000
Purchase of portable refill stations for events	\$3,000	\$ -	\$3,000
Refill station grant program	\$6,500	\$6,500	\$13,000
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$16,500</b>	<b>\$11,500</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>

Keep Truckee Green staff anticipate that roughly half the available grant funding may be spent in FY 23/24, and half in FY 24/25. This CIP also includes \$40,000 for business grants to support the Single-Use Foodware Reduction Ordinance grant programs. To date, staff have only received applications for \$3900 in foodware grants. While staff are proposing to extend the Single-Use Foodware Reduction Ordinance grant program deadline to early 2024, it is still anticipated that there will be unspent funds remaining in this allocation. If the water bottle filling station grant program is successful, staff may reallocate some of the unspent foodware grant funds to this program and/or other single-use bottle reduction measures.

**V. Next Steps**

If approved by Council, Keep Truckee Green staff will begin promoting the water bottle filling station grant program and accepting applications. Staff are also pursuing development of a regional water bottle filling station map in coordination with the TWSA. This would help residents and visitors more easily locate filling stations, water fountains, and businesses willing to refill reusable bottles free of charge.

Additionally, Keep Truckee Green is developing outreach campaigns to support single-use water bottle reduction, beginning with the launch of the “Mountain Mindset” campaign in November 2023. More directed outreach promoting single-use bottle reduction will be developed based on the results of the follow-up surveys, which are currently underway. These surveys are being conducted as intercept surveys outside grocery stores in Truckee, and available in both English and Spanish.

As described in the timeline presented to Council in May 2023, staff plan to return to Council in winter 2023/24 with a proposed ordinance to prohibit the sale and distribution of single-use plastic water bottles under a gallon in size. Currently, staff anticipates introducing a proposed ordinance in January 2024. This report will include the results of the additional community surveys conducted by KTG staff.

**Priority:**



Enhanced Communication  
 Infrastructure Investment

Climate and Greenhouse Gas Reduction  
 Emergency and Wildfire Preparedness

Housing  
 Core Service

**Fiscal Impact:** This program would use \$13,000 in funds from CIP 2309 intended for single-use bottle reduction measures, as outlined in the 5-year CIP projections approved by Council in June 2023. It is anticipated that \$6,500 would be spent in FY 23/24 and \$6,500 in FY 24/25.

**Public Communication:** Agenda posting.

**Attachments:**

1. Grant Guidelines for Town of Truckee Refill Station Grant Program
2. April 25, 2023 staff report available at: <https://portal.laserfiche.com/Portal/DocView.aspx?id=59653242&repo=r-6a91ddbc>
3. Mountain Mindset campaign examples