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Boston councilor wants more public water fountains, water filling stations around city

Posted by Matt Rocheleau December 3, 2012 12:44 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

A Boston city councilor wants to see more water fountains and other water drinking and filling stations at public places around the city – an effort aimed at promoting health and reducing trash.

“I believe we need to begin to rethink tap water consumption and availability in Boston,” said a statement from District 6 City Councilor Matt O’Malley.

“We are seeing the long-term health impact linked the consumption of sugary drinks,” he continued. “We are also seeing the long term environmental impacts of the astronomical number of plastic water bottles being discarded. We need to look at making water available to residents in public places in a safe, clean and affordable way.”

O’Malley filed an order for a hearing to be held to explore the “best practices, safety and new technologies around the delivery of tap water in public places,” including city parks and open spaces, according to a press release from his

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including city parks and open spaces, according to a press release from his office. The meeting has yet to be scheduled.

O'Malley said several major cities are re-examining tap water delivery.

Over the past couple of years in San Francisco, officials have begun installing newly-designed "tap stations," which allow residents to fill reusable water containers "in a clean and sanitary way," according to the councilor.

He said that two environmental watchdog organizations, Environmental Working Group and Corporate Accountability International, rank Boston's tap water as some of the cleanest and safest water in the nation.

But, O'Malley said that Massachusetts residents drink more than 300 million gallons of bottled water per year, the sixth most consumed of any state in country.

Less than 20 percent of those bottles are recycled and the rest end up in landfills or on the roadside as litter, the councilor said, citing the organizations' statistics.

O'Malley also said that environmental think tank Pacific Institute has said that bottled water is up to 2,000 times more energy intensive to produce than the region's tap water.

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