



## CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

301 E. Huron St., P.O. Box 8647  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104-8647  
[www.a2gov.org](http://www.a2gov.org)

### A2H2O REUSABLE WATER BOTTLE WEB MAP LAUNCHED

ANN ARBOR, Mich., January 14, 2011—Ann Arbor residents and visitors are now able to help promote water bottle reuse by sharing photos of “where in the world” they are using the city’s specially-imprinted reusable water bottles. From Gallup Park to Greece, people can post their photos of A2H2O water bottles to a Google-based Panoramio world map (<http://www.panoramio.com/map/?tag=a2h2o>) linked to [www.a2gov.org/A2H2O](http://www.a2gov.org/A2H2O). This effort to increase awareness of refilling water bottles with tap water is being launched in connection with the University of Michigan’s LSA Winter 2011 Water Semester ([www.watersemester.com](http://www.watersemester.com)). A selection of various A2H2O imprinted stainless steel and plastic water bottles and imprinted bottle-wraps are sold for \$1-\$5 at the city’s Customer Service Center, 220 E. Huron, open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. A special commemorative U-M LSA 2011 Water Semester A2H2O stainless steel water bottle will be available at many U-M campus water events this winter and is also being sold for \$5 at the city’s Customer Service Center, while supplies last. Details of A2H2O paraphernalia and the Web map project are posted at [www.a2gov.org/A2H2O](http://www.a2gov.org/A2H2O).

#### Uploading photos on the A2H2O global Web map

1. Go to [www.panoramio.com](http://www.panoramio.com) and click on “Upload your photos.”
2. Create a free account by selecting “Create account now.”
3. Upload a photo and add a title and comment. **Important:** In the Tag field, you must type “A2H2O” for your photo to show up in the worldwide A2H2O map. (Please note the “O” in A2H2O is the letter O, not the number zero.)
4. Click “Map this photo” and drop the red pointer in the appropriate location. Click “Save position” and then “Save.”
5. Go to <http://www.panoramio.com/map/?tag=a2h2o> to see all A2H2O photos in a world map! It will take a few days for your picture to be displayed. Panoramio reviews photos before posting.

Disposable water bottles generate substantial waste. According to the *Story of Bottled Water* author Annie Leonard ([www.storyofbottledwater.org](http://www.storyofbottledwater.org)), a half-billion disposable water bottles are consumed in the U.S—enough waste to circle the globe over five times *each week*. Millions of tons of carbon dioxide result from plastic water bottle manufacturing and disposal each year. The recycling industry’s Container Recycling Institute reports that only 12 percent of America’s water bottles are recycled, resulting in 840 bottles sent to landfills every second. The A2H2O bottle map demonstrates that consumers can do better! Refilling water bottles forgoes using disposable bottles and cuts down on unnecessary waste.

The City of Ann Arbor promotes refilling reusable water bottles with municipal tap water. Tap water is not only a bargain at less than a penny a gallon, but it is more stringently-regulated than commercially bottled water. Using Panoramio, a free Google Web program, anyone can add photos of A2H2O bottles linked to a geographical location, and contribute to the growing community of traveling reusable bottles! Please visit [www.a2gov.org/A2H2oO](http://www.a2gov.org/A2H2oO) for full details and instructions on how to upload photographs to the Web. The A2H2O photos are posted online at <http://www.panoramio.com/map/?tag=a2h2o>.



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### Selected Resources:

- Container Recycling Institute <http://www.container-recycling.org/facts/>
- International Bottled Water Association [www.bottledwater.org](http://www.bottledwater.org)
- Earth Policy Institute [www.earth-policy.org](http://www.earth-policy.org)
- Natural Resources Defense Council [www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org)
- [www.thinkoutsidethebottle.org](http://www.thinkoutsidethebottle.org)
- Center for a New American Dream refillable bottle pledge <http://c3neewdream.org>
- National Geographic [http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/02/0224\\_060224\\_bottled\\_water\\_2.html](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/02/0224_060224_bottled_water_2.html)
- "Story of Bottled Water" by Annie Leonard, 8-minute video clip [www.storyofbottledwater.org](http://www.storyofbottledwater.org)
- American Waterworks Association [www.drinktap.org](http://www.drinktap.org)
- City of Ann Arbor [www.a2gov.org/a2h2o](http://www.a2gov.org/a2h2o)
- US EPA <http://www.epa.gov/safewater>

ADDENDUM: Related to Ann Arbor's refillable tap water campaign is the message that the vast majority of U.S. municipal tap water plants provide high-quality, safe drinking water. An alarming report in December 2010 released by the nonprofit Environmental Working Group identified the occurrence of hexavalent chromium (also known as "Chromium-6") in 31 of 35 cities tap water tested nationwide, including Ann Arbor. Hexavalent chromium is not a regulated contaminant, but is being considered for regulation by the State of California. While hexavalent chromium can come from man-made sources, it can also be naturally-occurring at low levels. The amount of the compound detected in Ann Arbor is 0.21 parts per billion—a quantity that until recently was too small to be measured. While the discussion of exposure to toxins is of public interest, the bottom line in the tap vs. bottled water debate is that commercially-bottled water is just as likely to exhibit this trace level as municipally-treated tap water. Buying bottled water is not a guarantee to eliminate exposure. According to City of Ann Arbor officials, the city's tap water continues to meet or exceed federal quality standards, including total chromium levels.

According to Molly Wade, Ann Arbor's Water Treatment Services Manager, total chromium, which includes hexavalent and trivalent forms of chromium, is regulated under the national Safe Drinking Water Act. The maximum allowable level of total chromium in the finished drinking water is 100 parts per billion. Ann Arbor is required to test its finished water for total chromium every nine years. However, the city tests the water for chromium on an annual basis. Results from the last three annual Ann Arbor water tap samples were below the EPA-approved laboratory method's minimum detection limit (currently set at 2 parts per billion). Samples below the minimum detection limit are considered "not-detected."

Wade adds that if the city detected total chromium at 2 parts per billion or above, follow-up samples would be taken to determine the levels of hexavalent and trivalent chromium. Wade observes that Ann Arbor was not contacted by EWG to participate in or to inform the city of the study. It is unknown where EWG collected the water sample(s) or what laboratory method was used to analyze the sample.

For more information about Ann Arbor water treatment services, including the annual water quality report, please visit [www.a2gov.org/WaterTreatment](http://www.a2gov.org/WaterTreatment).

*Ann Arbor has 114,000 residents, spans 27.7 square miles, and is frequently recognized as a foremost place to live, learn, work, thrive and visit ([www.a2gov.org/news](http://www.a2gov.org/news)). To keep up with City of Ann Arbor information, subscribe for e-mail updates ([www.a2gov.org/subscribe](http://www.a2gov.org/subscribe)), follow us on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/a2gov>) or become a city fan on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/thecityofannarbor](http://www.facebook.com/thecityofannarbor)). The city's mission statement reads: The city of Ann Arbor is committed to providing excellent municipal services that enhance the quality of life for all through the intelligent use of resources while valuing an open environment that fosters fair, sensitive and respectful treatment of all employees and the community we serve. # # #*