



Fiji Water: Artesian Water or Environmental Nightmare?

Fiji's Environmental Contribution

Fiji Water has been criticized for the environmental costs embedded in each bottle. The production plant runs on diesel fuel, 24 hours a day. The high-grade plastic used to make the bottles is transported from China to Fiji, and then (full of water) to the United States. A 1 liter bottle of FIJI Water contaminates 6.74 liters of water to stretch-blow mold the plastic, burns fossil fuel to transport plastics from China and full bottles to the U.S., and produces 0.25 kg of greenhouse emissions.

250g of CO₂ are released for each bottle of FIJI Water imported to the United States. This includes 93g for manufacturing a bottle in China, 4g for transporting an empty bottle to Fiji, and 153g for shipping a full bottle to the United States. Fiji Water's total carbon footprint, a measure of the exclusive global amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases emitted over the full life cycle of a product or service, was 85,396 tonnes CO₂eq in the base year 2006 – 2007 for all bottles produced. Seventy-two percent of those emissions came from manufacturing raw materials, bottling and ocean freight. Overall, the average energy cost to make the plastic, fill the bottle, transport it to market and then deal with the waste would be "like filling up a quarter of every bottle with oil."

Additional Environmental Impact Created By Fiji Water

Bringing these bottles of water here from the other side of the earth involves packing them into cardboard boxes. In the South Pacific this often means rainforest cardboard, produced from rainforest destruction. The boxes of bottles are then trucked from the bottling plant to a sea cargo terminal in Fiji, then shipped across the ocean on fossil-fuel-powered freighters to the US Pacific coast. The fuel these ships use produces exhaust gases – Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x), Sulphur Oxides (SO_x), Carbon Monoxide (CO), Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) and Particulate Matter (PM) which contribute to global warming and other air quality issues. Unregulated oil and bilge water discharges affect the sea and marine life. So do leakage and waste fluids from ship machinery. Noise and vibration from vessels impact marine mammals. Grease on wires washed off during mooring operations gets into the sea. Chemicals used for deck cleaning or surface preparation prior to painting can be washed overboard. Aquatic marine organisms and pathogens attached to hulls are spread around the world, threatening indigenous species.

Once they arrive in the United States, they're loaded onto trains and trucks, all powered by fossil fuels, and eventually warehoused, prodded with forklifts, loaded onto other trucks, shipped to other warehouses and eventually delivered to your local convenience store or drink machine.

It is already clear that the manufacturing process and product distribution is energy-intensive and produces toxic byproducts, but there is another major environmental impact. When we're done drinking our water, over 85 percent of these bottles wind up in landfills (where they take up to 1,000 years to degrade) and incinerators—the latter of which can release a potpourri of deadly toxics into the environment. Recycling plastic bottles is still often cost-prohibitive.

From the environmental impact, you might as well be swigging down a pint of oil! All of a sudden that bottle of refreshing Fiji Water doesn't sound so refreshing!