Memorandum of Support

March 1, 2022

S.7463 (Reichlin-Melnick)/A.8435 (Fahy)

Purpose: S.7463/A.8435 would prohibit the sale of single use plastic water bottles in all state parks managed by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Statement of Support: One million single use plastic bottles are sold around the world every minute, but less than a third of these will be recycled. Most of these plastic bottles will be burned in incinerators, buried in landfills, or dumped into our oceans, where microplastics end up in fish and eventually in our bodies.¹

The manufacturing of single use plastic water bottles requires up to 2,000 times the energy needed to produce tap water.² And most plastic bottles today are made from fossil fuels. Producing the 289 billion plastic bottles purchased in the US every year takes 17 million barrels of crude oil, enough to power a million cars for a year.³ Adding in the energy costs to fill them and transport them to market, it takes a staggering 63 billion gallons of oil to supply the US with plastic beverage bottles each year, most of which will be discarded after a single use.⁴ About 60% of these bottles are plastic water bottles.⁵

Clearly, the manufacturing and eventual disposal of single use plastic water bottles wastes energy, pollutes our environment, and costs more than the production and delivery of tap water. Tap water is often cleaner than bottled water, as well, which benefits the health of consumers. Tap water is regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), while bottled water is regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The EPA has tighter standards than the FDA⁶, so drinking tap water is often healthier, especially considering that about 45% of bottled water is filtered tap water anyway and plastic from the bottles can leach into the water before it is consumed.

New York should take proactive steps to mitigate its carbon footprint, cut down on plastic pollution, and protect the health of its residents. S.7463/A.8435 would do just that by prohibiting state parks from selling single-use plastic water bottles. While not all state parks have concessions or vending machines that sell plastic water bottles,

¹ https://www.beyondplastics.org/fact-sheets/replace-plastic-bottles-with-aluminum-cans
² http://large.stanford.edu/courses/2018/ph240/jacobsen1/
³ https://habitofwaste.org/call-to-action/plastic-bottles/
⁴ https://www.drinklavit.com/blog/plastic-isnt-green
⁵ https://plastoceans.org/the-facts/
⁶ https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/should-you-drink-tap-or-bottled-water/
those that do should install water bottle refilling stations or water fountains instead, to make sure that visitors to the parks have access to a source of hydration.

Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter supports this step to free us from the scourge of single use plastics and protect our health, while at the same time cutting down on climate change impacts of fossil fuel use.

The Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Strongly Urges Your Support of S.7463/A.8435.