February 27th, 2015

Dear Mr. Maki,

Following a discussion of the proposed Bemidji State University Student Senate bill **SB15-05: Bottled Water Policy**, the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) at Bemidji State University approved the following statement on Feb. 23rd, 2015:

*The Environmental Advisory Committee recommends that administration support SB 15-05.*

This bill supports BSU’s Signature Theme of Environmental Stewardship. Bottled water is expensive, wasteful, and unnecessary in Bemidji. Our tap water is a high quality, and for the past six years the Sustainability Office has been providing free reusable water bottles for all new students. ElKay water bottle filling stations in campus buildings make filling bottles easy and convenient and provide additional filtration.

We would like to address the questions raised at the President’s Cabinet meeting on Feb. 5th, 2015 regarding the human rights implications of bottled water. In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly and the UN Humans Rights Council voted to recognize the right to water and sanitation as basic human rights. In doing so, the UN affirms that every person has the right to safe, clean, and affordable water. The bottled water industry continues to purchase water rights in communities, place the water in bottles, and charge a handsome fee for what is essentially bottled tap water. As people become accustomed to paying handsomely for the water they drink, support for affordable and accessible public water systems will erode, moving us towards a world where access to clean drinkable water is dependent on your ability to pay.

As the Environmental Advisory Committee of Bemidji State University, we support SB15-05 to remove the sale of bottled water from campus. We encourage the administration to do the same.

Sincerely,

Erika Bailey-Johnson, Alexandra Miller, and Richard Marsolek

Co-Conveners, Environmental Advisory Committee

“Yes” votes of voting members:

Dr. Tim Brockman, Associate Professor of Technology, Art, and Design

Dr. Jill Stackhouse, Assistant Professor of Geography

Dr. Sue Rickers, Assistant Professor of Social Work

Trevor Smith, undergrad student

Brian Brown, grad student

Alexandra Miller, undergrad student

Dan Vosberg, undergrad student

Skyler Vold, undergrad student

Anna Carlson, Assistant Sustainability Director