City Develops Sustainable Solution for Tap Water in Schools

SFPUC expands tap water pilot project to 21 additional schools.

January 25, 2012 (San Francisco) — Board of Supervisors President David Chiu, along with representatives from the SF Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), SF Unified School District (SFUSD), SF Department of Public Health (SFDPH) and California Endowment announced the completion of phase one of the city’s tap water pilot program at five public schools. The successful initiative will now be expanded to 21 additional schools throughout the city that lack drinking fountains in their cafeterias.

The main focus of the SFPUC-funded project is the installation of “combo taps” (traditional bubbler drinking fountain with a bottle filling function) in cafeteria sites. The units allow students to fill reusable containers throughout the day and encourages students to reduce waste and avoid single-use plastic bottles. As part of the project, SFUSD and SFDPH are educating students about the high standards of San Francisco’s Hetch Hetchy tap water and evaluating their decision-making around beverage choice.

“Our school tap water project is just another example of San Francisco spearheading innovative solutions to reduce waste, educate students and improve the health of our children,” said Board of Supervisors President, David Chiu. “As a city, we want to empower our students to make proper nutritional choices and become leaders in sustainability.”

The five pilot program schools include John Yehall Chin Elementary, Tenderloin Elementary, Jose Ortega Elementary, Sutro Elementary and Wallenberg High. Additionally, the California Endowment foundation provided a grant that purchased 2,500 water bottles for students in the 5-school pilot project. The next phase of “Drink Tap in Schools” is scheduled to begin spring/summer 2012.

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