

**GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2018
ARCHIVES' RESEARCH REPORT**

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-B025
TITLE: Water as a Human Right
PROPOSER: The Rt. Rev. Marc Andrus
TOPIC: Environment

Directly Related: (Attached)

2009-A045 Restrict Use of Bottled Water and Practice Conservation
2009-A156 On the Topic of the Place of Water in a Theology of Creation (Rejected)
2003-D046 Urge Stewardship of Water Resources
2003-D070 Work for a Clean Water Policy

Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

2012-B023 Seek Environmental Justice
2009-C011 Directs Advocacy on Renewable Energy and Environmental Stewardship
1994-A044 Adopt Environmentally Sound Practices at Church Meetings

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1976 through 2015, selecting "direct" resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The "direct" resolutions are attached and "indirect" resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives at 800-525-9329 before Convention or at Convention in the General Convention Secretariat.

B025 Water as a Human Right

Proposer	The Rt. Rev. Marc Andrus
Endorsed by	Rickel, The Rt. Rev. Gregory; Goff, The Rt. Rev. Susan
Sponsored by	
Page numbers	Blue Book: p. N/A; Constitution & Canons: p. N/A
HiA / Leg. Cttee	/
Current Status	Pre-Filed Resolution
Version	Original (as filed)
Review Status	Not yet reviewed

RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 79th General Convention of the Episcopal Church urges the Church to learn about the watersheds in which our congregations and institutions are located; and be it further
- 2 *Resolved*, That the Episcopal Church recognize the public trust that protects the waters and community uses in the watersheds of the communities and regions that make up the Church; and be it further
- 3 *Resolved*, That the Episcopal Church recognize water and sanitation as human rights and water as a commons; and be it further
- 4 *Resolved*, That the Episcopal Church phase out and eventually ban, by 2021 the sale or distribution of bottled water in Church-related facilities and at Church events; and be it further
- 5 *Resolved*, That the Episcopal Church promotes and advocates for publicly financed, owned, and operated safe water and wastewater infrastructure and services.

EXPLANATION

Water is a potent symbol in the Bible. The waters of the oceans represent immense power and chaotic forces. On the other hand, fresh water is life. We may bring to mind both the great prophets, Isaiah and Ezekiel used the images of fresh water springing up in the desert as way to talk of God's providence and grace. Increasingly, we can feel the truth of the prophets' insights as we witness the distressing lack of access to fresh, clean water today. According to the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, currently 780 million people do not have access to clean water.

At this point in history, with an unprecedented human population of over seven billion, and with agricultural practices, urbanization, and water privatization all making potable water scarce across wide regions of the world, we now understand that drinkable, safe water must be regarded as a basic human right.

The privatization of water complicates and adds to the difficulty of access to clean water, and has also added to the stunning accumulation of discarded plastic, through the selling of bottled water. In 2014, 100.7 billion beverages in plastic bottles were sold in the United States alone, according to the

Container Recycling Institute.

This resolution helps the Episcopal Church become aware of the watersheds in which our worshipping communities and institutions are located, commits us to advocacy for the public ownership and management of water resources, and commits us to phasing out and eventually ending the use of plastic bottled water in the Church.



Resolution Number: 2009-A045
Title: Restrict Use of Bottled Water and Practice Conservation
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention ask the Church to restrict the use of bottled water at General Convention and at other Church-sponsored activities where safe, because of the extreme negative environmental impact that attends its production; and be it further Resolved, That every baptized Christian be encouraged to practice simple energy and water conservation techniques so that, by working together, we may restore the beauty of God's creation and ensure that this resource may again be available to all God's children in abundance.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), pp. 373-374.



Resolution Number: 2009-A156
Title: On the Topic of the Place of Water in a Theology of Creation
Legislative Action Taken: Rejected
Final Text:

Resolution died with adjournment. See Legislative History for original text of resolution.

Citation:



Resolution Number: 2003-D046
Title: Urge Stewardship of Water Resources
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention urge dioceses, congregations, and communicants to regard water resources as precious, and to recognize that the right use of water is an explicit means to show love for one's neighbor, since water connects people and all creatures throughout the global community; and be it further

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention encourage dioceses, congregations, and communicants to become active stewards of their water resources through conservation efforts including reduction of consumption; through examination of water discharge such that contaminated water does not improperly leave church grounds; and through the creation of environmental programs for stewardship of water and the whole of creation and for the education of congregants in regard to good and faithful stewardship of the earth's resources; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention encourage dioceses, congregations, and communicants to undertake one or more of the following four stewardship steps:

- **When and where possible, install water-saving devices, such as low-flow commodes and aspirators on sink faucets.**
- **Replant church grounds and home gardens with plants and trees that are drought-tolerant and have low needs for water, and that are native to the region and therefore able to survive local climatic conditions.**
- **Devise drainage systems that allow rainwater to flow from gutters and drain pipes to spread onto the lawn and landscaped areas of church grounds and home gardens, thereby reducing water lost to sewer systems.**
- **Pave new or repave existing parking lots with materials that are pervious, so that water penetrates into soil beneath parking areas, thereby reducing the flow of oil and other auto fluids into streams.**

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 314f.



Resolution Number: 2003-D070
Title: Work for a Clean Water Policy
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention ask the Office of Government Relations to work on public policy to ensure that clean water is accessible and available to all; and be it further Resolved, That the Standing Commission on Anglican and International Peace with Justice Concerns be urged to make water a priority.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 331.