

January 22, 2015

Tara Pike
4505 South Maryland Parkway Box 454015
Las Vegas, Nevada 89154
United States

RE: Letter of Affirmation for the Plastic Bottle Trade in Program for the STARS
Innovation Credit

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to support the University of Nevada, Las Vegas STARS initiative. This letter of affirmation is written to support innovation credits and in this particular case, the Plastic Bottle Trade In Program that is conducted through myself representing UNLV Dining, along with the UNLV Take Back the Tap campaign, and the UNLV Housing & Residential Life Department. I will describe the program and how it became such a successful activity and awareness event on this campus.

The Plastic Bottle Trade In Program was first introduced to UNLV through the UNLV Reduction Plan of Plastic Bottle Usage. A UNLV student and myself created the report and the goal of the report was to present various recommendations for the university to reduce its reliance on single use plastic water bottles. One of the recommendations proposed the idea of a trade in program. The trade in program asks people to trade a certain amount of single use bottles (i.e. 5 to 10 bottles), and in return for their deed, they are awarded with a reusable water bottle.

This awareness activity was then adopted by the sustainability initiative within ARAMARK and I began to coordinate events around this idea during the spring 2014 semester. Since then, ARAMARK has collaborated with UNLV Take Back the Tap and the UNLV Housing & Residential Life Department to host various trade in events to gain more campus participants. The events usually take place two days in a row and are held within a two to three hour time frame. On campus, marketing is coordinated to gain as many individuals to participate in the event. Each event collects at least 100 plastic water bottles. One trade in event, which occurred during the fall 2014 semester, collected 900 single-use water bottles.

The Plastic Bottle Trade In program has been a success, it demonstrates to the campus that it is easy to switch to a reusable water bottle. This activity encourages participation through its positive reinforcement technique of awarding people for recycling bottles that would have perhaps otherwise been thrown away.

In summary, the Plastic Bottle Trade In program encourages more sustainable behavior amongst the campus community. Though UNLV is not a plastic-bottle free campus, the measures taken by the campus to reduce its reliance on plastic bottle water is truly commendable. This university is a true role model for other universities in our region and

across the country. It has been a pleasure assisting in the various bottle water initiatives on campus.

Sincerely,

Monica G. Garcia

B.A. Environmental Studies

B.A. Sociology

ARAMARK Sustainability Intern

Take Back the Tap Founding Campus Coordinator

University of Nevada, Las Vegas