

Mr. Ryan Rowe,

Thank you for compiling this information on our filters. We reviewed Mr. Baker's comments with interest. For hundred of years sand filters served a valuable service; but like with many things, new technology offers better results. The Sawyer® filters eliminate the three main drawbacks of sand filters: 1) the start up time, 2) the limited amount of water produced, 3) the maintenance variables – when to recharge and the down time of recharging, both leaving the users dependent on suspect water.

Mr. Baker neglects to point out that sand filters take time to form bio layers, are slow to filter water once the bio layer is formed, and have questionable periods as to when the bio layers are working. Sand filters have to have the bio layers cleaned and re-grown periodically – during which time the water is not safe to drink, and needs to be maintained by a trained person. These contrasts to a HFM filter where if water is flowing, that water is safe. Sawyer filters only need periodic backwashing (which takes less than a minute), and then safe water continues flowing at or near original flow rates. The filters provide a volume which enables the household to not only use the water for cooking and drinking, but also for hygiene. And while true that with turbid water, the flow slows and needs to be cleaned more often, it still is much faster than sand filters.

There are several HFM filters available, but none that match Sawyer's specifications. Perhaps Mr. Baker's position of anti HFM for long term water filtration is based on his experience with inferior HFM applications and not being familiar with Sawyer's technology. To wit he claims the fibers are 0.1 micron inside diameter, when in fact it is the pore size through the fiber walls that are 0.1 micron absolute. This makes the fibers extremely easy to clean with as much as over 99% regeneration of original filtering capabilities after backwashing. He wrongly assumes, based on no knowledge of the filter's fibers that the filters will need replacing. The Sawyer fibers are robust and in this application they can last decades. Therefore no "replacement supply chain" is needed.

Mr. Baker goes on to imply that filters are hard to import, but misses the fact that we have independently owned assembly facilities and distributors in over 45 countries supporting the local economies, so in most cases, there are no worries about hassles with import fees. In fact in Haiti, where he criticizes the local government and accuses them of being dishonest, Sawyer has two independent warehouses and one assembly facility.

Mr. Baker compares virus removal rates of a fully mature sand filter to the Sawyer PointOne™ filter. And while we do not make a claim of viral removal the very same science that allows the sand filters to remove viruses also allows the Sawyer PointOne filter to remove viruses as well. Water borne viruses clump in particulate to keep from being exposed to UV light. This natural occurring process makes it easy for the sand filter, as well as the PointOne filter, to remove them. But the big difference is the Sawyer filter is removing them on day one, not 200 days later. We could make a claim to this effect, but since our filters are also sold retail we prefer to stay with the EPA published protocols and claim accordingly. Based on the overwhelming amount of anecdotal

evidence, we are presently considering changing our position and engaging in lab testing to show the filters do in fact remove viruses in natural applications.

At this point in time there are many more Sawyer Filters in use than sand filters in use. We constantly encounter organizations which switch from sand filters to our HFM technology; that alone tells us the people on the front lines know the difference.

We do acknowledge that our filter works best when the recipients have a solid understanding of how to use and care for the filters. The educational process gets better each year as the filter becomes more widespread. Still, soon there will be over 100 million people getting their daily water from Sawyer filters.

As for the claim that we are discredited because Sawyer is a for profit company; perhaps they should look closer. It is our for profit side which allows us to deep discount and subsidize the filters for NGOs.

Perhaps it is time for sand filter loyalists take a new and an unbiased look at Sawyers application of HFM technology and better serve the people with water issues by including Sawyer filters as an option in their recommendations.

John T. Smith
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