

Portland Press Herald Maine Sunday Telegram

MAINE VOICES

'Green' image hides Poland Spring's goal

The company wants to gain control of water rights in as many Maine communities as possible.

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Two Poland Spring water trucks fill up at a spring in Fryeburg before heading to one of the company's bottling plants, in Hollis, Poland Spring or Framingham, Mass.

In response to the June 14 front-page article, "Expanding Poland Spring":

Nestle/Poland Spring is expanding in Maine, especially in York County. The 1-liter (16.9-ounce) or the 20-ounce bottle is the typical one sold as a single at many stores. The cost is usually \$1.39.

The price you pay just for the water, at the gallon rate, is \$10.52. And you thought gasoline was expensive? This is a spectacular marketing success for Nestle; remember, it's only water.

Nestle/Poland Spring wants more water. It targets small towns with low population and limited government; that's one reason why the company picked Shapleigh for a possible pumping station. There are many comparable towns in Maine where water can be removed.

The company says it is clean and green. Ask people who have to drive or live near their vast 22-wheel diesel trucks going 24/7, every single day. Then, after you drink from any small or medium-size plastic Poland Spring container, fill it one-quarter full of a very dark liquid, then look at it. This is the amount of petroleum required to produce the container.

In addition, 2 liters of water are also required just to make the container. Then still more fuel is required to distribute the bottles. Roughly 20 percent of the containers ever get recycled. Plastic bottles in the landfill take 1,100 years to decompose.

Nestle/Poland Spring's extensive extraction might eventually interfere with the natural hydrologic cycle, since many millions of gallons of Maine water go hundreds, even thousands, of miles away. The loss of potable water is both local and worldwide. Water is the new gold – it will replace petroleum in value.

Residents of other communities, not only in Maine but also nationwide, have found that the two words brought to mind with this company are "misinformation" and "greed."

Residents who wish to have a contract with Nestle/Poland Spring should take their time and find out all about the company. Two books, "Bottlemania" and "Blue Covenant," have just been published, detailing all the problems with large-volume water extraction, and this company is mentioned numerous times.

The long-range, low-profile goal of all private water companies, whether involved in bottling – like Nestle/Poland Spring, Coke or Pepsi – or in systemwide water distribution – like Aqua America, Veolia, Suez, Thames and numerous others – is the complete, private control and sale of water to everyone.

Want to give up your water for 30, 50 or 100 years to Nestle? Once they take it, it is no longer your water, even though it's under your feet, under your property, under your neighbor's land. Unless, of course, the company removes too much water.

Be sure you know what you are choosing. If you don't like it, join the groups now protesting the depletion and privatization of our water. If Nestle/Poland Spring takes your water, will you lose "Maine: The Way Life Should Be"?