

The Truth About Bottled Water and the Coming Water Crisis

Corporations like Nestlé seek to profit from the water crisis by selling bottled water at very high prices. People around the world and right here in New England are saying that water is a fundamental right for people and nature. It should not be controlled by profit-seeking corporations.

💧 1.1 billion people already do not have access to clean water and the crisis is getting worse.

💧 2.6 billion people do not have access to basic sanitation services so their drinking water becomes contaminated.

💧 Water related diseases are one of the leading causes of disease and death in the world.

💧 In the U.S., over 30 states are facing shortfalls of water as agribusiness, mining, and industry suck up and pollute water supplies and subdivisions proliferate in the desert. .

💧 Bottled water costs 500 to 4,000 times more than tap water.

💧 Tap water is strictly regulated by the EPA and tested many times a day, while bottled water is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration with only one professional staff person for the whole country.

💧 Very few plastic water bottles are recycled. Municipalities have to pay for their disposal in landfills.

💧 5-gallon water jugs have been found to leach bisphenol-A, a hormone disruptor, into the water.

💧 U.S. plastic bottle production requires more than 17 million barrels of oil, enough to fuel one million cars. The oil used to produce a bottle of water would fill the bottle 1/4 full.

💧 Water is needed in an ecosystem in order to sequester carbon and mitigate global warming. Massively exporting it can lead to deforestation and desertification.

Poland Spring, a locally-owned health spa and bottled water company dating back to 1845, was first bought by Perrier in 1980 and then acquired by Nestlé, the largest food and beverage corporation in the world, in 1992. Since then it has been pursuing rapid expansion in Maine.

Fryeburg

The towns of Fryeburg and Denmark have learned that Nestlé does not want to take NO for an answer. Denmark passed an ordinance forbidding the trucking of water in town after Nestlé acquired a local spring. So Nestlé built a pipeline to East Fryeburg and planned to build a transfer station to load its tanker trucks there.

Fryeburg already had experience with Nestlé which purchases over 600,000 gallons of spring water from a local company, Pure Mountain Springs. Residents have seen their beautiful Lovewell Pond become fouled with algae as its source of cold spring water is shipped out of state for Nestlé's Poland Spring bottled water.

Western Maine Citizens for Rural Living was formed to oppose the transfer station and brought their case to court. When the court sent the decision back to the Fryeburg Planning Board, the Board and its Appeal Board turned down the permit request. Nestlé is now taking Fryeburg to court to overturn decisions by Fryeburg boards.

Rangely

In May of 2007, Maine's Land Use Regulatory Commission (LURC) approved a proposal by Poland Spring to pump over **185 million gallons** a year from Dallas Plantation. Dallas Plantation borders Rangely and sits upon the same aquifer that provides Rangely with water.

The diverse group of residents from Rangely believe that LURC violated its own land use policy upon approving Poland Spring's proposal and has sued LURC. The Maine Supreme Court has heard the case and is expected to make a decision soon. Meanwhile, Rangely residents are boycotting Poland Spring.

Poland Spring, Plum Creek and the Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy's lead attorney is Philip Ahrens of Portland's Pierce Atwood law firm. Mr. Ahrens also sits on the Nature Conservancy's Corporate Conservation Council of Maine. Mr. Ahrens also represents Poland Spring.

Meanwhile Plum Creek is trumpeting to the state that their conservation easements will forever preserve hundreds of thousands of Maine wilderness, they have failed to mention that industrial logging, spreading of sewage sludge, putting up of cell phone towers, road building and bulk water extraction can all be done on the easement to be managed by the Nature Conservancy,

This should come as no surprise. Plum Creek and Poland Spring already have a history of working together. In 2004, Plum Creek sold a 460 acre parcel of land along Pierce Pond to Nestlé Waters North America. Pierce Pond is now a location where Poland Spring pumps water for its commercial enterprise.

Maine's Water: Is it for Sale to the Highest Bidder?

For More on protecting Maine's water
for people and nature:

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