



CAMPAIGNING TO KEEP
WATER AS A PUBLIC TRUST

Our Water is Not For Sale to the Highest Bidder!

A worldwide crisis over water is brewing. According to the United Nations, 31 countries are now facing water scarcity and 1 billion people lack access clean drinking water. Water consumption is doubling every 20 years and yet at the same time, water sources are rapidly being polluted, depleted, diverted and exploited by corporate interests ranging from industrial agriculture and manufacturing to electricity production and mining. The World Bank predicts that by 2025, two-thirds of the world's population will suffer from lack of clean and safe drinking water.

Rather than taking the dramatic action necessary to protect precious water resources, governments around the world are retreating from their responsibilities. Instead of acting decisively, they are bending to the will of giant transnational corporations that are poised to profit from the shortage of water. *Fortune* magazine has predicted that "water is the oil of the 21 century" and corporations are rushing to invest in the water business.

Giant water, energy, food, and shipping companies have plans to buy water rights, privatize publicly owned water systems, promote bottled water, and sell "bulk" water by transporting it from water rich areas to markets desperate for more water. At the same time, to ensure maximum profits, these companies are lobbying to weaken

water quality standards, and pushing for trade-agreements that hand over the U.S. water resources to foreign corporations.

Right here in the United States, where some regions are already suffering from serious water shortages, corporations from Vivendi to Nestle are poised to make a profit on water. Some corporate interests even want to sell bulk water from the Great Lakes, the

world's largest freshwater system. The Great Lakes have suffered from pollution, lost two-thirds of their extensive wetlands and experienced a catastrophic loss of biological diversity. Only 3% of the shorelines are suitable for swimming.

Water resources in Wisconsin and Michigan have been targeted by giant bottled water companies like Perrier. Selling bottled water is one of the most successful revenue generating schemes for private corporations. As drinking water has been degraded, the bottled water industry is promoting its expensive product as the solution.

Unfortunately, bottled water is not adequately regulated, and tap water is actually subject to more rigorous testing and safety standards. A 1999 study of bottled water found that bottled water is no safer than tap water, and sometimes is less safe. Meanwhile, companies like Coca-Cola are selling purified tap water as a healthy option, and they believe that in the long run selling water will be more profitable than selling Coke.

"Water is the last infrastructure frontier
for private investors"
- Johan Bastin, European Bank
for Reconstruction and Development

Water is a common good and access to water is an inalienable human right. Water belongs to the Earth and all species and must not be treated as a private commodity to be bought, sold and traded for profit. Because the global water supply is a shared legacy, protecting it is a collective responsibility.

For more information about the water crisis and to get involved in the Water for All Campaign contact:
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