

Defending Water for Life Campaign

Spring Forward

Working to expose the bottled water industry and keep water out of the bottle

Why should Alliance members and chapters care about bottled water?

- Bottled water is the way corporations are taking the human right to safe, affordable, accessible drinking water and turning it into a commodity to be sold at market prices for those who can afford to pay the price, often 1,000 times the cost of tap water.
- With bottled water, the giant corporations, primarily Coke, Pepsi and Nestle are creating a whole parallel distribution system over which they have full control.
- More than 10 billion plastic water bottles end up as garbage or litter each year. We are all paying the cost of their disposal by our tax dollars.
- Bottled water introduces a whole new stream of toxic plastics, from the manufacturing of the plastics, to the punching out of the bottles putting plastic dust into the waste stream, to the leaching of hormone disruptors from some kinds of plastics into the drinking water, to the leaching of these same chemicals into our landfills.
- Bottled water itself is not tested by the US EPA. It is regulated by the FDA which does no testing. While Coke and Pepsi use municipal water which is tested by US EPA, Nestle uses spring water which is only tested by the industry. When NRDC tested more than 1000 bottles of 103 brands, they found contamination exceeding allowable limits in at least one sample from about one-third of the brands, including synthetic organics, bacteria, and arsenic. Check out <http://www.nrdc.org/water/drinking/bwbwinx.asp>

Want to learn more? Here are some websites specifically on bottled water:

Sierra Club Corporate Water Privatization Task Force at <http://www.sierraclub.org/cac/water> and the Bottled water campaign and brochure at www.sierraclub.org/cac/water/bottled_water/

Polaris Institute: *Inside the Bottle: An Expose of the Bottled Water Industry*, by Tony Clarke. (January 2005). To order: <http://www.polarisinstitute.org>. See new www.insidethebottle.org website and bottled water campaign "Awareness to Action" kit with popular education tools such as a pamphlet, notepads, coasters, stickers, CDs, buttons and stickers, some that can be ordered in bulk.

kNOw Bottled Water at: www.kNOwBottledWater.org for facts, articles, links.

McCloud Watershed Council at <http://www.mccloudwatercommons.org>. A citizen's group in McCloud, northern CA at the foot of Mt. Shasta that "remains unconvinced that the projected Nestle water bottling plant would be good for McCloud."

Save Our Groundwater (S.O.G.) <http://www.sog.org>. A citizen action group dedicated to advocating that water is a natural resource to be held in the public trust and to be protected now and for the future. Formed in response to the request for a large groundwater withdrawal permit by USA Springs, Inc. on land near Nottingham and Barrington, southern New Hampshire.

Corporate Accountability International (formerly Infact) www.stopcorporateabuse.org, protects people by waging and winning campaigns that challenge irresponsible and dangerous corporate actions around the world. See their bottled water campaign against Nestle, Coca Cola and Pepsi Cola at www.stopcorporateabuse.org/campaign/exposebottledwater.

Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation <http://www.savemewater.org>. Founded to resist Nestle Water North America from building a super-sized bottling plant in Mecosta County. dedicated to helping Michigan citizens protect one of the most valuable natural resources – our communities' water supplies. MCWI began in reaction to Nestle building a super-size bottling plant in Mecosta County.

What You Can Do!*

1. Avoid buying and using bottled water unless necessary for emergencies and health.
2. Use a stainless steel water bottle. Refill it from the tap and carry tap water with you when travel.
3. At public events, at the office and at home offer pitchers of water. Ask your public officials to do the same at public meeting that are televised to the community. Don't give the water bottlers free advertising.
4. Find out where bottled water sold in your stores comes from and if the pumping is having an impact of the environment.
5. Call your elected officials to put them on notice about the privatization of our water supply. Find out what they know - build a relationship and work with them to head off privatization efforts. Advocate for strict local, county and state groundwater laws to protect your aquifer, watershed, and other water sources. Talk to your local officials about adopting ordinances that will prevent private companies from withdrawing local water and bottling it for sale and private profit.
6. Work to be sure that your public works department provides good quality tap water and that it is available for everyone in your community at an affordable price. Research the quality of your local public drinking water. For consumer confidence reports, go to www.epa.gov/safewater/ccrl.html. For information about your local drinking water, go to www.epa.gov/safewater/dwinfo.htm. Work to identify local actual and potential sources of pollution and advocate for enforcement of laws, penalties and clean-up.
7. Talk with your family and friends about the serious public health impacts of plastics production and discard. Remember, illegitimate corporate persons have no right to pollute our bodies without our consent. Learn about the Precautionary Principle as a way of protecting your community from harms and protect water resources. See the Be Safe Campaign at <http://www.besafenet.com> and the Science and Environmental Health Network at <http://www.sehn.org/precaution.html>
8. Check out what policies exist and exclusivity contracts may have been signed with bottled water companies such as Nestle (see www.nestle.com/our_Brands/Bottled_Water), Coca Cola (Dasani) and Pepsi Cola (Aquafina) by your local school board, community organizations, government, or local institutions of higher learning. Advocate for adequate funding of public education, not easy deals with corporations to make up budget short-falls.
9. Inquire whether local restaurants are excessively relying on selling and serving bottled water. Educate them about the issues. Maybe they will change to pitchers and offer tap water.
10. Do a price comparison of local municipal tap water and bottled water brands at your local stores and publicize it. Ask your local food coop or other sympathetic stores to post the price comparison and if they sell low-cost bulk water for refillable jugs emphasize this water is inexpensive and good quality.
11. Advocate for conservation such as energy and water-efficient appliances, use of grey-water systems in housing retrofits, new developments, and for landscaping; create and publicize lists of plants and trees that needs the least water for your climate conditions.
12. Work in alliance with other groups and build a network of grassroots support to keep water services and resources under local democratic control. Work with fair trade groups to learn how the trade agreements impact public control and local sovereignty. Educate your local officials.

* compiled from different sources