

CURRENTS

News from the Water for All Campaign

May 2006

Greeting Cards for a Good Cause

Throughout April and May, people around the country have been crafting and sending homemade greeting cards to Donald Correll, the new CEO of American Water. Dozens of cards from around the country were sent to Mr. Correll's office in New Jersey during his first month on the job. Why? They want to let him know that with the change in leadership at the corporation, they're expecting a change in corporate policy. CEO Correll and American Water should respect the rights and desires of communities that want local control of their water by allowing them to buy their local water utility for a fair price. Want to join the fun? Send a homemade card to:

Food & Water Watch
c/o Victoria Kaplan
1400 16th Street NW, Suite 225
Washington, DC 20036

Long, Hot Summer For Ocean Water Desal

Two southern California cities, Carlsbad and Huntington Beach, seem to be determined to be the first on the Pacific Coast to install a huge, energy-cobbling, polluting, and unneeded ocean water desalination facility. Working with a private speculator, Poseidon, it seems to us their only objective is to provide expensive water for more coastal development. Now the San Diego County Water Authority, the regional water wholesaler, has released a competing Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for an even larger boondoggle of a plant also co-located at the old coastal power plant in Carlsbad. Upcoming meetings and hearings include the Carlsbad City Council which has the final but inadequate EIR coming to them after passing through its planning commission in mid-May. The date for the city council hearing is June 13th at City Hall Council Chambers at 6 p.m.

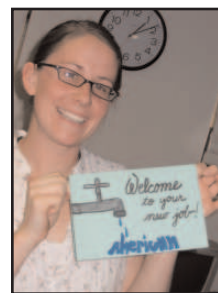
Meanwhile, Monterey Bay has two large proposals to locate a desal plant on the edge of the beautiful Elkhorn Slough at the Moss Landing Power Plant. One proposal involves the private Poseidon now partnering with a very small, local public water agency, Pajaro Sunny Mesa. The other proposal is with RWE/Cal Am which is before the California Public Utilities Commission. A public hearing is coming up on July 18th in Monterey. In another beautiful but isolated site on the California coast, Cambria, below the famous Big Sur, the Army Corps of Engineers is involved in bringing desal to an undeveloped area. Stay tuned.

Bush Administration Mum on Opposition

Thanks to concerned citizens like you, nearly 1,000 members on our Water for All list have taken action against the Bush administration's attempt to undermine U.S. water quality. If you have not already taken action please go to <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/alert-your-drinking-water-is-at-risk-and-so-s-your-health>. Numerous environmental, utility, consumer and health-based groups have made their protest heard. If the administration ignores our voices, the proposed change may result in increased cancer and other disease-causing chemical contaminants in the drinking water for millions of Americans. Such a change does not only impact our drinking water quality standards, but could have wide ranging impacts on our ability to protect the environment. Make your voice heard today!



TOP: Water activists display homemade greeting cards for the new CEO of American Water, Donald Correll, asking him to respect the wishes of communities who want local control of their water!



RIGHT: A concerned citizen shows off her artistic and activist skills with her homemade card.

Regulation Degradation: The WTO's Next War on Clean, Affordable Water

There's a party going on at the World Trade Organization, and as is usually the case with the WTO, you're not invited. This party aims to get rid of laws that keep our water safe, clean and affordable. It's called the Working Party on Domestic Regulations, and negotiators hope to have it wrapped up soon. This free-for-all attack on domestic laws and regulations are part of the General Agreement on Trade in Services, GATS for short. When the Party finishes, countries will be required to prove that their own regulatory laws are "not more burdensome than necessary" or "no more trade restrictive than necessary." This means that the regulatory structure and our ability to make local decisions about our water is being undermined by our trade negotiators. Current negotiations include restrictions on laws governing: standards and labeling for bottled water; levels of contamination in water bodies resulting from services like waste disposal; standards for wastewater treatment; and licensing requirements and standards for pipeline construction and engineering. It will be unaccountable WTO judges who will decide whether or not U.S. laws are too "burdensome." WTO judges are notorious for ruling against consumer choice and environmental protection. They have sided with Monsanto over the artificial bovine growth hormone (rBGH) and genetically modified organisms, and against the U.S. Endangered Species Act's protection of sea turtles. You may ask, why would countries have to prove *anything* before passing laws to protect their own people? We'd like to know that, too. We'll keep you updated.

Fund Clean Water, not Corporate Coffers



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Congressional Budget Office, the Government Accountability Office and the Water Infrastructure network (Food & Water Watch is a member) all estimate that the funding gap for clean water in the U.S. will exceed \$300 billion over the next 20 years. But apparently, Congress isn't listening. The House Appropriations Committee recently decided to cut funding for fiscal year 2007 (from \$887 billion to \$688 billion). Congress sure has an odd way of celebrating National Drinking Water Week, which coincided with the decision. At a time where we're facing growing concerns in communities across the country on how we can fund the clean up of our streams and treat our waste, Congress decided to cut corners and leave communities with the clean up bill. Meanwhile the corporate lobby in Washington is seeking public hand-outs through a proposal that will lift caps on private activity bonds, which essentially means large corporations get access to tax free financing.

**Check out our new water
photo gallery on our Web site!
www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water**

TAKE ACTION!

Your drinking water is at risk!

The Bush Administration is proposing to weaken health protections under the Safe Drinking Water Act that may result in up to three times or more the amount of cancer and other disease-causing chemical contaminants in the drinking water for millions of Americans than is currently allowed.

Act now: <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/alert-your-drinking-water-is-at-risk-and-so-s-your-health>

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