

Currents

food&waterwatch

News from Food & Water Watch's Water for All Campaign

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Members of Congress Call For Clean Water Trust Fund

Food & Water Watch executive director Wenonah Hauter was among many luminaries calling for a trust fund for clean and affordable water at an annual clean water policy forum in Washington, DC in May.

While American tap water is among the safest in the world, our water pipes and treatment plants are aging and deteriorating in the face of less money for renewal and repair and of more people needing household water service. Public utilities are struggling financially to meet federal clean water standards, to maintain and modern-

ize water systems, and to prevent sewage spills that render our water unsafe for drinking, swimming, fishing, and wildlife. Most Americans agree that investing in our public water systems should be a national priority.

In a roundtable discussion on the future of the Clean Water Act after 35 years, Hauter raised concerns about how we would pay for continued implementation of this important Act. There is an estimated \$22 billion annual gap between available funds and what is needed to keep our water clean

and safe. "We have a trust fund for highways and a trust fund to keep the Texas prickly pear blooming," said Hauter. "We need a trust fund for clean water."

Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) spoke enthusiastically about the trust fund in an opening address. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) echoed, calling the idea of a trust fund "right on the money!" Congress will have to shift priorities to pay for this important initiative, she explained.

American Water Leaks: German Utility Dumps Bad Investment

The vast majority of Americans--86% of us--get our water from a local, public utility. Despite the fact that the United States has some of the best water systems in the world, private water companies continue to try and wrest control of this essential resource away from the public. These corporations often argue that they can do the job better and cheaper. But the private water industry undermined its own argument last week when Food & Water Watch released the sealed minutes from a board meeting of one of the world's largest private water companies, Germany-based RWE.

These documents cite "considerable political resistance to privatization of the water sector" and "performance problems and weak growth at American Water" as reasons for the German utility's quick exit from the water business. RWE is planning to sell American Water, the largest private water company in the United States, later this year, after owning it for fewer than 5 years.

The minutes also cite outdated infrastructure, increasing regulatory requirements, and opposition to rate increases as



Leaked minutes reveal that public opposition to private ownership of water in communities like Felton, California was a major factor in RWE's decision to sell American Water.

challenges to profitability in the American Water division.

"These minutes demonstrate that RWE doesn't believe that private water companies in the United States are a good investment. The company is dumping their bad investment on Wall Street investors and American ratepayers," Wenonah Hauter, our executive director, told reporters. Instead of looking to privatization, our government should protect current and future generations of Americans by dedicating a funding stream for water - a trust fund to keep our water clean and safe.

U.S. News & World Report picked up the story, which you can read at <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/biztech/articles/070515/15water.htm>

Download the full text of the RWE board minutes at: <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/corporations/american-water/rwe-boardminutes.pdf/view>

It's a fun read, we guarantee!



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Join Us At The US Social Forum In Atlanta This Summer

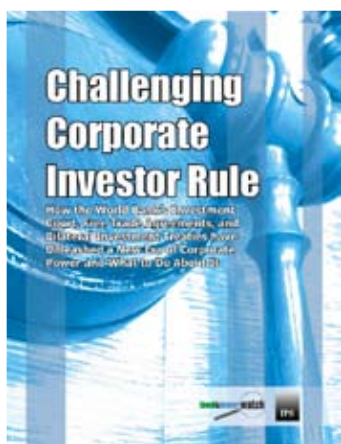
Curious about the latest campaigns challenging corporate control of our water? Excited to meet fellow concerned citizens and activists? Craving some hands-on training and strategizing?

Join us at the first ever United States Social Forum this June 27 through July 1 in Atlanta, Georgia. The US Social Forum is a gathering of non-profit organizations, activists, educators, artists, and students ready to work together to build a more equal society.

Food & Water Watch is working with our allies to organize more than a dozen social forum programs specifically related to water issues. We'll have workshops, roundtable discussions, movie screenings, cultural activities, and more!

Food & Water Watch has travel scholarships available for those who would otherwise not be able to attend the US Social Forum. Contact Victoria at 202-797-6556 or vkaplan@fwwatch.org if you're planning to come, or to find out how to apply for a scholarship. For more information on the US Social Forum, visit <http://www.ussf2007.org/>.

New Report: Trade Deals Work Against Consumers



Food & Water Watch's new report, "Challenging Corporate Investor Rule," exposes how trade and investment agreements work against consumers' interests, and how they undermine environmental and social safeguards. About 70 percent of disputes profiled in the report involve private investment in public services such as water, electricity, and telecommunications, or investments in natural resources such as oil, gas and mining. The agreements governing such investments

give unprecedented power to multinational corporations over the governments of poor and middle-income countries. You can find the report on: <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/pubs/reports/corporate-investor-rule>

Ojai Joins the FLOW

A proposed 44% rate increase by one of California's largest private water companies, Golden State Water Company, has citizens in the town of Ojai, CA up in arms. The rate package offers minimal upgrades to the water system, which is in poor shape, but proposes more money for the company's investors. In response, a group of citizens have formed Ojai FLOW (Friends of Locally Owned Water). FLOW kicked off its campaign with a town hall meeting featuring Food & Water Watch. More than 50 people attended and learned about the possibility of buying the water system from the company and restoring local, public control. Ojai's water rates are more than twice as high as neighboring water districts that are publicly owned. FLOW will work to build community support and pressure Ojai's City Council to study an acquisition.



New Bottled Water Newsletter

Get a tall glass of tap water, sit back, and go on-line to read *AquaBits*, our consumer information newsletter about the bottled water industry. We are proud to feature stories correcting (mis)information from the bottled water industry about their product being safer and healthier than most tap water in the United States. We will be focusing on stories about bottled water health, contaminants, filtration, and interesting facts about water. You can get your copy of *AquaBits* at: <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/aquabits>



For more information about bottled water and protecting your water sources please visit our website at <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/bottled> and remember to take the bottled water pledge!

! Become a member of Food & Water Watch at: www.foodandwaterwatch.org



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