

Currents

food&waterwatch

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

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Stockton Privatization Ruled Illegal

The Concerned Citizens Coalition of Stockton (CCCoS) may have just won the most decisive battle in their four-year campaign to overturn the privatization of their wastewater system.

A state judge ruled that the privatization was illegal as the City failed to conduct an environmental review of the 20-year contract signed with Thames Water-OMI. The

contract was ratified in 2003 and promised to save the city millions of dollars, but after only three years of private management the wastewater system is riddled with problems.

The CCCoS will work to get the City Council to accept the ruling and terminate the contract. The ruling is a victory for public ownership and the grassroots organizing of CCCoS and the Water For All campaign.

Take a Stand for a Clean Water Trust Fund

Many of our city water pipes and sewers were installed in the early part of the 20th century, some as far back as the civil war. As the systems age and population grows, more and more leaks develop and sewage overflows into our streams, rivers, lakes and ocean, creating serious public health hazards.

Public health agencies issued more than 20,000 warnings against swimming at beaches on U.S. coasts in 2005. A majority of beach closings are due to sewage overflows and malfunctioning sewage plants.

In fact, there is a shortfall of more than \$22 billion per year between the funds available and what is needed to keep water safe for human and environmental health. The federal government has cut the main source of funding for clean water year after year. It's time to fill the funding gap with a trust fund - a dedicated funding source and sustained commitment to safe and affordable public water.

Sign on to the Food & Water Watch statement to ask Congress to provide dedicated funding to protect our water sources and keep our water clean and safe: <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/Alerts/americaswater>



Blue October

Blue October activities commemorated the historic October 2004 vote by the people of Uruguay which recognized water as a fundamental human right. Water activists from all over the world celebrated the month with local events.

During 'Blue October' Food & Water Watch organized

more than 35 film screenings of the Bolivian documentary *Fuera* in homes, on college campuses, and at public libraries throughout the country to raise awareness of water struggles around the world. Thank you to all of the excellent hosts!

The month culminated with a large event in Montevideo, Uruguay. Water activists discussed the impact of international trade regimes and the management of water resources. Participants pledged to continue to work together to support strong public, financial, environmental and socially sustainable water management and to build international solidarity on water issues.



Peru Scraps Proposed Privatization

A broad coalition of organizations under the umbrella of the Frentes de Defensa del Agua y la Vida (Fronts for the Defense of Water and Life) have fought the government's water privatization plan. Under the plan thirteen municipal water utilities were slated for privatization. But due to the pressure of the coalition, the government cancelled the bidding process in one of the cities, the town of Huancayo.

The proposed contract had already been downsized twice before it was dropped altogether. Frentes is calling on the government to recognize that the proposed plan lacks popular participation, transparency and accountability. The coalition has called for a broad national dialogue to re-define the national policy toward water and sanitation.

Desalination Update

San Diego's regional water supplier has once again rejected plans to obtain desalinated water from the private water company, Poseidon. Desalination plants use a huge amount of energy, harm marine ecosystems, promote unsound coastal zone management, and create air pollution. Additionally, desal plants may concentrate harmful seawater contaminants, which end up in the drinking water. Food & Water Watch, along with local groups, has organized against the slew of desalination plants proposed on the Californian coastline.

The San Diego Water Authority ended negotiations with Poseidon on a new desalination plant in Carlsbad, CA in July and reaffirmed this decision in October citing high costs. Although company officials said they will continue to press for a deal, the water authority's decision was a setback to Poseidon because it may mean the corporation's proposed desalination plant will have to be scaled down from a regional to a local project.

In national news, a number of proposals in Congress that would have given hundreds of million of dollars in taxpayer subsidies to speculative desalination projects fronted by large corporations, have stalled. With Congress returning to Washington to complete unfinished business before Christmas, we are watching to make sure nothing slips through.

Does swallowing extra oxygen in overpriced bottled water improve athletic performance? Nope. Read about this and more in Aquabits, a quarterly newsletter about the bottled water industry: www.foodandwaterwatch.org/publications/aqua-bits-fall-2006

Pending Decision in Argentina

The Popular Commission to Take Back the Water in Cordoba, Argentina is challenging the legislature's approval of a new water privatization contract. The legislature is scheduled to approve a new contract with Aguas Cordobesas. Suez, the world's second largest water corporation, is a key shareholder in the country.

Approval reportedly would add 27 years to the current very controversial contract, forgive unpaid taxes and fines owed by the company and shareholders, cost the government millions of dollars, and significantly raise water rates.



The people of Cordoba, Argentina tell Suez to "go home" in September 2006.

Election Day Wins and Losses

Food & Water Watch is disappointed for Bluegrass FLOW and Lexington, Kentucky's loss in the referendum that would have authorized the city to purchase their water utility, Kentucky American.

We were pleased to have helped secure a victory defeating California's Proposition 90 which would have made it harder for cities to purchase private water companies.



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