

# Currents

food&waterwatch



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

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### Florida: Beating Back the Bottlers

Central Florida is known for its crystal clear natural springs, extensive system of underwater caverns and, maybe very soon, for its water bottling plants and trucks.

On September 30, the Gilchrist County Commission will vote on whether to grant a new bottling permit in the area.



The permit would allow for up to 500,000 gallons of water to be extracted each day from Blue Springs, a spring near High Springs, Florida that stems from the larger Santa Fe River. The new facility would sit very close to an existing Coca-Cola/Dannon water bottling plant that is already extracting up to 1.2 million gallons of water each day.

Neighboring residents and Our Santa Fe River, an area community organization, have pointed out that the water extractions could irreparably damage the aquifer and the surrounding ecosystem. The water district charged with oversight of the Santa Fe River has not completed environmental impact studies on flow levels in the river, and little is known about the degree to which further extractions could affect the sensitive ecosystem on which much of the local tourism industry depends.

The struggle in Florida is another battle in the national endeavor to fight corporate efforts to needlessly bottle water from local supplies. Stay tuned to Currents for more news on this important fight.

### Citizens' Initiative to Appear on Akron Ballot

We're on the ballot! A citizen's initiative that would guard against hasty utility privatization contracts in Akron, Ohio will be on the ballot in that city this November.

In May, Citizens to Save Our Sewers and Water (Citizens SOS) launched a voter initiative to amend Akron's charter to require that any action by the mayor or City Council to sell or lease a city utility be approved by a majority of voters in Akron. The initiative was a response to Akron Mayor Donald Plusquellic's effort to lease the city's wastewater system to a private company. That risk still remains, however the initiative would subject the proposal to a public vote.

Passage of the initiative would follow in the footsteps of similar successful efforts in New Orleans and Stockton, California. Look to Akron for future news in the fight to maintain public control of community water systems!

### Coming to a Theater Near You...

Join thousands of other water activists in theaters around the country as the World Water Crisis comes to the big screen this fall. Through November Food & Water Watch will be hosting screenings of the film *FLOW: For Love of Water* in major cities across the country.



*FLOW*, directed by filmmaker Irena Salina, is a passionate, fact-filled world tour of the issues facing the planet's water resources. From India to South Africa, Michigan to Washington D.C., *FLOW* shows the public challenges and the public fights for control over this most essential resource. Focusing on issues of human rights, environmental destruction and corporate greed, *FLOW* will both inspire and call you to action.

Learn more about *FLOW* and see the trailer online at: [foodandwaterwatch.org/water/films/flow](http://foodandwaterwatch.org/water/films/flow)

## A Good Year for Water in the California Legislature

Food & Water Watch has had a successful year working to protect water as a public trust in the California legislature.

This year advocates of public water stopped several bills that would have promoted the privatization of public infrastructure, including water and wastewater treatment facilities. These irresponsible proposals included a plan to create



a taxpayer-funded office for promoting privatization as well as provisions allowing privatization contracts of up to 50 years.

Food & Water Watch also sponsored Assembly Bill 2275, authored by Assemblyman Fuentes, which requires public disclosure of the source and volume of water bottled in California each year. The bill would help determine how much of California's water, which is protected as a public resource in the state's constitution, is already being exploited

for profit by bottled water corporations. The bill, which is urgently needed as California faces drought and increasingly scarce water supplies, has passed the legislature and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

California residents have until the end of September to call Governor Schwarzenegger at (916) 445-2841 and urge him to sign Assembly Bill 2275.

### We're Growing!

This summer Food & Water welcomed new staff to the Take Back the Tap team. We're happy to welcome a new team of West Coast organizers, including Corie Lopez in San Diego, Renee Maas in Los Angeles, Natalie Lloyd in San Francisco, and Nancy Matela in Portland. Mark Schlosberg will join the team in San Francisco as our California Campaign Director, and Mitch Jones will join the D.C. office as our new Lobbyist and Policy Analyst. You can look forward in coming months to hearing about their great work with Food & Water Watch!



Staff and volunteers serve filtered tap water at Slow Food Nation in a station specially made from reused materials. Photo by Mike Kahn/Green Stock Media.

## Food & Water Watch Makes a Splash at Slow Food Nation

Sixty thousand people from around the country recently flocked to San Francisco on Labor Day weekend for Slow Food Nation; with a little help from Food & Water Watch they managed to take back the tap.

This summer Food & Water Watch partnered with Slow Food Nation—an event designed to celebrate and enjoy local, sustainable food—to make the event completely free of bottled water. Attendees enjoyed delicious San Francisco tap water at water stations throughout the three event locations. Food & Water Watch staff, along with over 30 volunteers, spent the weekend serving up tasty San Francisco tap water at stations throughout the event, educating consumers about the benefits of drinking from the tap. Popular author and food superstar Michael Pollan even stopped by for a sip!

A wildly successful feature at the water stations was our co-branded Take Back the Tap and Slow Food Nation stainless steel water bottles. Food & Water Watch sold over 4,000 bottles in just three days, a testament to the fact that consumers are ready to kick the bottled water habit!

For more information about how Food & Water Watch made Slow Food Nation a bottle free event, download our guide, *Free Your Event from Bottled Water*, online at: [www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/pubs/water-guides/](http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/pubs/water-guides/)

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