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Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation Calls on Citizens to Fight Back

Mecosta -- With the State's collapse of restrictions to protect the Great Lakes and Nestlé's announcement that it may look in Michigan for a second water bottling plant site, Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation is calling on citizens to fight back and protest the private sale of its water and take charge of its water resources.

In late January, Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation and Nestlé entered into facilitated mediation setting interim pumping limits while the parties appeal critical water issues to the Michigan Supreme Court. The Michigan Supreme Court is the only branch of government with any power to put a stop to the private take over of Michigan's public waters. Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation intends to appeal and ask the Supreme Court to put water back under controls of traditional water law that protect riparian landowners and public use and enjoyment of Michigan's magnificent waters. The state's long-term economy and quality of life depend on it.

"Nestlé waited until it could obtain legislative exemption in Michigan for bottled water before it dropped both the state and federal lawsuit. Only with public control should Michigan consider allowing the private sale of water and only this will ensure long term jobs and clean abundant water in lakes, streams, and the Great Lakes," explains Terry Swier, president of Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation.

With the signing of new water legislation, the Governor's office and legislature is handing Michigan's water over to a private corporation without restriction to amount or keeping it in our watershed or the Great Lakes Basin, and without a penny for Michigan's citizens in return. Nestlé is now wanting to go full speed ahead, simply because it wants to grab the water before anyone protests and does something about it's actions.

According to Jim Olson, attorney for Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation, "The few jobs promised by Nestlé are tokens compared to the real unemployment crisis in Michigan, and will never make up for the problems with the state's economy. If anything, the giving away of a valuable public resource like water in exchange for a few jobs is an outrageous policy decision. Michigan is giving away its birth right to its water legacy. The original idea of establishing a Michigan Legacy for water for the State has turned into a liability.

If there are situations in the future that merit selling water, the public should say so, there should be assurances of no diminishment or harm to the flows in our lakes and streams, and the state should insist on being paid a royalty to be held in trust for the benefit of its citizens," explains Jim Olson.

Swier said, "Michigan has declared to the world that money for large corporations is more important than Michigan's water. We've mortgaged our water and are receiving absolutely nothing in return. This is a breach of the public trust in government to manage our water resources for the benefit of all citizens and business, not just one corporation favored by those in power."

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