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Petition update

Report from March 28, 2018 Spring Township Water Authority Board Meeting



Nittany Valley Environmental Coalition
State College, PA

Mar 29, 2018 — From Kelli Hoover - Nittany Valley Environmental Coalition President

The Terms of Agreement that was passed around the room at the STWA meeting last night is NOT the Terms list the STWA voted on. It is an alternative vision written by a member of the NVEC as an ideal agreement that would include profit sharing with the public.

3.27.18 ALTERNATIVE Term Sheet

<https://stopnestlewaterextraction.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/3-27-18-alternative-term-sheet.pdf>

The Terms list APPROVED by the Spring Township Water Authority Board on February 28, 2018 as a non-binding agreement between STWA and Nestle is attached below.

2.28.18 APPROVED NON-BINDING STWA-Nestle Terms

<https://stopnestlewaterextraction.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/2-28-18-stwa-nestle-terms.pdf>

As you can see, the approved Term Sheet gives the power to Nestle to breach the agreement with limited ability of STWA to terminate the agreement if that occurs.

It also has no termination date, and it states that Nestle can take water up to the permit for Well-2 (PW-2, the Cerro well), which is permitted at 499,000 gallons/day, which is also the maximum allowed pumping rate for all wells combined (well 1 and well 2), according to the SRBC and DEP permits.

STWA Board Chairman Doug Weikel indicated last night that the STWA board is interested in the proposed Nestle contract because STWA needs the money to maintain the

water system and fix leaks that have plagued them for many years.

We know from review of STWA minutes, that the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection has been commenting on STWA water loss rates from leaks since at least 2006.

STWA customers should ask Weikel and the other STWA board members:

1) How much would STWA need to raise rates to keep the water supply as a public resource for the residents and not sell water to Nestle? Would the rate be \$5/1000 gallons? What would it take to fix leaks and maintain a healthy water supply without Nestle?

2) Will you hold a public hearing where you lay out transparently and clearly exactly what STWA is proposing as the agreement with Nestle?

Doug Weikel complained last night about a lot of misinformation and misrepresentation of the facts by opponents.

If STWA doesn't tell the public what the facts are, there will be misinformation.

So post the well testing data for PW-2 online and make it free to the public and tell us the plan in detail.

They still have not done this and then wonder why people are skeptical of their motives and their plans.

Thanks to those who came last night. There were about 100 people there!

Similar info, by Katherine Watt, NVEC Vice-President

Standing room in the room, spilling out into the hallway.

I couldn't see anything or hear very well, but I think the main info learned is that the water authority can't afford to fix the leaks in their distribution system causing them to lose up to 30% of their water using ratepayer funds at current rates (\$4.75 per thousand-gallons), so that's why they immediately ran with Nestle's proposal when Nestle came to them just after Halloween 2017, as the water authority was finalizing a decade-long process of drilling and permitting a second public well to be used as a backup source of supply (PW-2) for their existing customer base.

I don't think the water authority board has ever notified their customers about the estimated total cost to repair the leaks in the system, the estimated rate per thousand-gallons that would enable those repairs to be done by the current ratepayers, or given the customers the opportunity to shoulder those higher rates in order to protect their water from privatization by Nestle or other bottling corporations.

The information about the rationale for the proposed Nestle contract suggests that a sensible resolution shouldn't be too hard to reach.

We need to establish three things:

1. How much money does STWA need to make those repairs?
2. Are STWA ratepayers willing to pay to fix their own system and thereby keep Nestle out?
3. How much are other people in Centre County willing to kick in to help Spring Township - and other similarly cash-strapped water systems - and thereby help keep Nestle and other bottling companies out?

It's also interesting from a large trend perspective.

Municipal authorities were created in Pennsylvania to overcome taxpayer resistance to higher taxes for public services, back in the 1960s and 70s, by making a new revenue-generating scheme whereby "taxpayers" become "ratepayers," paying money for public services operating like private businesses.

A shell game, to be sure.

Cue Phase 3.

Decades of underinvestment in public infrastructure...flat or declining household incomes, off-shoring and automation of jobs...flat or declining income and property tax revenue for municipalities and flat or declining revenue for rate-funded municipal authorities...inflation in costs for materials to repair the broken pipes, roads, buildings, bridges...

In come the private corporations to "help," by offering to extract and export crucial public water resources, buying it at \$4.75 per thousand-gallons, and selling it on the private market at \$7,500 per thousand-gallons.

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