

5 REASONS ONTARIO'S PERMITS TO TAKE WATER FOR BOTTLING SHOULD REQUIRE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS



1

Nestlé takes water as the climate crisis worsens.

Water security threatened

Climate scientists agree that human activity is driving a climate crisis all across the Earth. The impacts on water

include more frequent and severe droughts, and reduced snowfall and snow pack. More severe storms create more run-off to storm sewers and streams—and potentially less groundwater recharge. These—plus water exports—reduce aquifer recharge rates. (The majority of water Nestlé extracts in Wellington County is sold and exported outside the local watershed.)

The climate crisis threatens water security of communities everywhere, making future 'water deficits' more likely. Since Guelph is the largest Canadian city that relies 100% on groundwater for drinking water, it therefore is especially sensitive to these changes. More than 200,000 people in Guelph and

Wellington County rely on local aquifers for drinking water.

A 2016 report by City of Guelph staff stated, "there is the potential for the Nestlé taking to constrain municipal water taking in the south end of Guelph, which may result in financial impacts as Guelph looks for other, potentially more remote and expensive water supply options."

Commercial bottling is an unnecessary form of water taking with serious consequences. The precautionary principle—don't act without proof that it's safe—dictates that permits to take water for bottling should be denied.

Cumulative effects on watershed ignored

Any watershed in Ontario is the site of multiple permits to take water. In the Grand River watershed, approximately 700 permits allow water taking, including a significant amount by municipalities. (Imagine each permit to take water as a straw. Each straw sucks water from the same aquifers, affecting ecosystems over the entire watershed.)

Permits to take water can be thought of as representing the 'expense' aspect of a water budget. On the 'income' side, deep aquifers need decades or even centuries to recharge water levels. But there is currently no adequate accounting of the income/recharging aspect of a water budget, a failure that means there is no reliable calculation of a watershed's water budget—and therefore no ability to forecast future water deficits.

As a result, when it grants permits, the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks doesn't take into account the cumulative effects of all threats to the watershed ecosystem—including rivers, wetlands, ground and aquifer waters.



2

Nestlé creates plastic pollution.

Every year, Nestlé and other water bottling corporations produce hundreds of millions of plastic bottles that take up to 1,000 years to decompose. In Ontario, approximately half of these plastic bottles are

discarded after a single use, ending up in landfill or litter.*

Nestlé has bottled 2 billion litres of water in Aberfoyle (south of Guelph) since its permit to take water expired in 2016. If all that water was packaged in 500-ml bottles and laid end to end, the 3.3 billion plastic bottles would reach around the Earth's circumference 16 times!

In all of Ontario, commercial water bottlers extracted 1.7 billion litres of water in 2017, producing the equivalent of 1.5 billion 500-ml. bottles that likely went to landfill or litter.

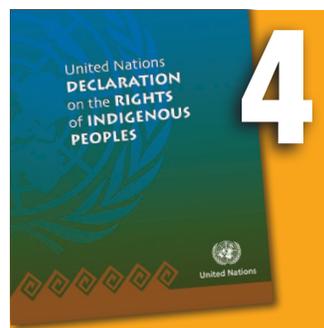


3

Microplastics in Nestlé's bottled water risks health consequences.

A new study from the University of Victoria found that humans ingest from 70,000 to 121,000 particles

of microplastics per year. Drinking bottled water may add 100,000 particles to a person's annual intake. With the impact of ingesting microplastics unknown, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has announced a review into the potential risks of plastic in drinking water.



4

Nestlé lacks the prior, free and informed consent of Indigenous people for water taking.

Corporate control of water violates Indigenous sovereignty in Canada. Treaty obligations

such as the Haldimand Tract Agreement of 1784 regarding the Grand River require prior, free and informed consent to any

* Who Pays What: An Analysis of Beverage Container Collection and Costs in Canada 2016, CM Consulting

land use, consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which Canada accepted in 2016. Neither Nestlé nor the Ontario government have obtained consent for water taking from either the Six Nations Band Council or the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Council:

- The Six Nations Band Council, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Council, the Chiefs of Ontario and the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians have all publicly opposed permits to take water for bottling.
- The Haudenosaunee Confederacy Council issued a cease-and-desist letter to Nestlé Waters Canada on June 7, 2019.



Makasa Looking Horse reads a cease-and-desist letter to Nestlé from Haudenosaunee Confederacy Council. June 7, 2019.



5 Nestlé ‘privatizes’ water by bottling it.

Allowing corporations to take water for bottling turns water into a commodity.

Issuing permits to bottle water transforms it from a public good into a tradeable economic good, a commodity. When corporations

obtain permits to take water for bottling, along with groundwater access they gain control of its pricing and distribution.

Corporations like Nestlé take groundwater essentially for free, paying only a small administrative fee: a fraction of a cent per litre. Water bottling companies, wholesale agents and retail outlets then multiply the price to hundreds of times the cost of drinking water provided by public water systems. Marketing bottled water undermines public confidence in municipal drinking water.

Keeping water public is an issue of local and global importance. Nestlé, for example, owns 100 bottling plants around the world and has assembled large tracts of land in order to control groundwater.

Population increase and variations in water availability due to the climate crisis increases the possibility of water scarcity. It is not in the public interest to allow corporate control of drinking water in any form.

Goldman Sachs called water “the petroleum for the next century”



Tell Ontario Premier Doug Ford and Jeff Yurek, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to designate all Permits to Take Water for bottling in Ontario for Environmental Assessment.

Doug Ford

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