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News from People's Water Board Coalition

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Michigan Lawmakers Take Steps to Close Nestlé's Bottled Water Loophole and Protect Our Waters for Future Generations

Michigan Waters, Protected for the People by the People, Not for Greedy Corporations

MICHIGAN – Today, over 10 years after the passage of the Great Lakes Water Compact and supporting state legislation, Michigan lawmakers have introduced bills to close Nestlé's bottled water loophole to ensure that Michigan's precious water resources are protected from greedy corporate interests for future generations.

"Our lawmakers failed us when they allowed Nestlé to recklessly pump Michigan's groundwater and ship it out of the Great Lakes basin," **said Peggy Case, president of Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation.** "Today, we are one step closer to seeing that dangerous loophole closed and to protecting Michigan's waters from corporations seeking to profit from our water resources."

The legislation introduced today by Representatives Yousef Rahbi, Laurie Pohutsky and Rachel Hood would amend Michigan's Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act by closing a dangerous loophole that allows the bottled water industry to ship water outside of the Great Lakes basin – something that is prohibited by the Great Lakes Compact – as long as it's in 5.7 gallon containers or smaller. The bills would also amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to hold Michigan's waters in public trust, enshrining in state statute that the waters of the state belong to everyone and no one, and that they are to be preserved as a public commons for all.

"As Michiganders, we sit in the center of 20 percent of the world's available, fresh surface water," **said Liz Kirkwood executive director of FLOW.** "It is our collective responsibility to protect this resource from companies like Nestlé who seek to profit from a resource that belongs to current and future generations. Ensuring that the waters of the state are held in public trust finally affords the waters of the state the protections they deserve."

Michigan's waters have faced numerous threats over the years. As water scarcity becomes an increasing problem across the globe, Michigan sits in the center of a very big target. It is our responsibility as Michigan residents and stewards of this resource to make sure that it is protected for all Michiganders to use and enjoy in perpetuity, free from privatization, commodification and corporate greed.

“We applaud Representatives Rahbi, Pohustky and Hood for recognizing that Michigan’s water should be held up not as a commodity, but as a resource that we have a responsibility to one another to protect,” **said Sister Mary Ellen Howard of the People’s Water Board Coalition.** “Water is a basic human right, and all people should have access to safe, affordable drinking water. The corporations that seek to own and profit from our water threaten that human right. The legislation introduced today makes it clear: Michigan’s water is not for sale!”

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