



Nestlé Waters North America Statement on “FLOW: For Love of Water”

Watch Nestlé Waters’ video response to “FLOW”:
http://www.nestlewatersvideos.com/responses/flow_response

This film increases attention to the importance of protecting water quality and using it sustainably, that’s a good thing. It also shines light on the issue that everyone does not enjoy access to a safe, reliable and affordable supply of drinking water. Bringing these issues to the public is commendable and important. Improving these issues will involve work by governments and development organizations, with innovation and assistance from the private sector.

Bottled water didn’t cause the environmental risks to public water described in this film and if it disappeared tomorrow, none of those risks would be lessened. In fact, people would lose an important option in situations where they don’t have access to reliable drinking water for the reasons identified in the film.

Bottled water represents *four one thousandths of one percent* (0.0004%) of total fresh water withdrawals world-wide. Does it make sense to blame bottled water for siphoning large quantities of drinking water, when the film itself points out that 70% of water use goes to agriculture (which involves pesticides and fertilizers that affect water quality), 20% is industrial (pollution again), and 10% domestic? The film makes bottled water a convenient scapegoat, instead of exploring what real solutions might look like.

Here are some facts about bottled water, and about us, that you don’t see in this film:

Fact: We are a responsible water user.

As a natural resource company, Nestlé Waters North America depends on the sustainable use of spring water sources. Some of our brands have been bottled at the same source for more than a century, and we have a vested interest in ensuring that water sources are viable for generations to come. For more about how we manage water in North America, visit: <http://www.nestle-watersna.com/Menu/Corporate-Citizenship>.

Fact: Bottled water is an important consumer option to promote public health.

Water is one of the few beverages that has no calories and no sugar. But there are lots of times people don’t have access to good quality public water at a tap or drinking fountain; and there are times when they will choose the convenience of a bottled beverage, a lot of times in fact. As a result, in the U.S., 70% of what people drink comes out of a package. Without access to bottled water, people will be drinking more beverages with calories and sugar, such as soda. Americans already consume nearly twice the amount of calories from beverages as they did a generation ago. And childhood obesity is up 370% in the last 30 years. Today 30% of Americans are obese, and many of the excess calories are coming from sweetened beverages. Drinking bottled water versus any other beverage is better for health, uses less water, and has a lighter environmental footprint.

Fact: Bottled water plays an important role in public safety

Bottled water is also an essential safety net in times of natural disaster or crisis. It provides critical drinking water when public supplies are rendered unpotable, such as following a hurricane, wildfire or flood, or other emergency. When a “boil water alert” is sent out by a community, bottled water can be an important resource for consumers. In the past three weeks, Nestlé Waters donated more than 1.25 million bottles of water to the American Red Cross and AmeriCares, and has supplied FEMA and local disaster agencies with additional millions of bottles of clean drinking water.

Fact: Bottled water is *different* than tap water.

The documentary also claims that bottled water is no different than public water in terms of quality and safety. That’s just not true. Most public water is safe to drink, but that’s not always the case. On occasion, public water can have a spike in pathogens such as cryptosporidium. Pharmaceutical

residues in public water supplies are another area of concern. Our spring water brands come from groundwater sources that are more isolated from such risks. And when we bottle public water, we put it through extra filtration steps that most public systems cannot afford.

Public water often has to have disinfection agents added to reach you safely after navigating miles of underground pipes. Bottled water, by comparison, goes straight from multi-step filtration into a sealed container, free of such disinfection agents when it reaches you.

Because bottled water has extra steps to promote quality and safety, it's not surprising that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control recommends it for people with weakened immune systems. And by law, U.S. Food & Drug Administration regulations for bottled water must be as strong and protective of public health as the Environmental Protection Agency's regulations for tap water.

Fact: We do not privatize water intended or used for public supplies.

Much of this documentary is about privatization of water supplies. Privatization didn't *create* the global water shortages or environmental conditions spotlighted in the film. The vast majority of water and wastewater projects in the world are owned and regulated by the public sector. That said, Nestlé Waters North America does not privatize any water – our company never assumes water service responsibility for any community. Sometimes we buy water from public suppliers just as other businesses and residents do. Other times we buy or lease land and its associated water rights – like most farmers or industries that use water to produce products. But unlike them, we leave most of the land undeveloped to promote water quality which provides natural habitat.

Fact: Our Michigan operations are treating the environment and communities with respect.

In Michigan and elsewhere, the amount of water we withdraw is based on scientific studies and requires governmental permits. The court ruling referred to in the film was overruled; the Appellate Court found bottled water to be “a lawful and beneficial use of water” and sent the case back to determine the appropriate rate of withdrawal. The company has worked with local opposition to determine these rates. Monitoring data is shared with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and other interested individuals and groups. *The monitoring record over the six years of our operations shows water resources and ecosystems have not been negatively impacted.*

The mudflats we are blamed for in the film have been naturally accumulating for decades. We've been harvesting Michigan water for six years. The Michigan DEQ says the mudflats are a positive part of the area ecology.

We performed assessments of private wells and established a well protection agreement with Michigan towns surrounding our facility. Under this agreement, overseen by local officials, citizens can report any issues with their wells. If we are found to be the cause, we will rectify the situation. *To date, no reports of well issues have been made.*

In fact, to better protect Michigan's water resources, we supported legislation that strengthens state water use laws, establishes permitting processes for large quantity water users, protects water resources, and prevents water diversion from the Great Lakes basin.

The documentary claims we harvest water in Michigan at no cost. We are a leading taxpayer in Mecosta County, paying about \$2 million in taxes each year, with a payroll of 275 jobs that are an economic catalyst for the area.

Fact: Nestlé SA is working on water issues around the world

Our parent company Nestlé SA works with local governments and other organizations to help more communities in need have access to safe and clean drinking water. To learn more about how Nestlé SA manages its water resources, visit: <http://www.nestle.com/SharedValueCSR/>

For additional information or questions, please contact Jane Lazgin, director of corporate communications for Nestlé Waters North America, at jane.lazgin@waters.nestle.com.