

Hearing date: March 11, 2016  
SB 422

Planning and Development Committee Co-chairs Sen. Cathy Osten and Rep. Philip Miller:

As our water moves from a public resource to a partially privatized one, I am concerned about our most valuable resource. When we see drought and pollution threatening health and even lives in our own country this is not someone else's problem. The quiet corporate scramble for this priceless resource brings home the observation "water is the new oil."

We have entered an age of extreme weather. There is no reason to expect that we, like other parts of the country, won't experience a period of drought. If--when--that happens, we need to have legislation in place that will privilege people over corporate profit. That sounds like a no-brainer, but in the current corporate climate it isn't. There is no provision for considering people first in times of hardship. Big business has already been offered a steeply discounted rate for both our water and the special sewer service charge [Clean Water Project charge] which encourages maximum usage. A bottling company is not, to my knowledge, being charged for the real and substantial pollution that manufacturing plastic bottles and running large trucks will certainly bring to Bloomfield and the surrounding area. If as Citizens United--still the law of the land--tells us "corporations are people," we must honor that law by justly treating the corporate citizen as equal to the private citizen who is not allowed large scale pollution and who must pay a full 100% for water and sewer use.

To save tax money in a state already in financial straits, it would be prudent to establish a citizen MDC "watch dog" committee and to set a moratorium on any new large usage water plans until projected environmental impact studies can be completed.

These are the steps that need to be taken now. Water, like the air we breathe, is a human right. I believe that it should not be privatized for corporate profit, and that if it must be trucked somewhere, Flint, Michigan would be a good place to start.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen E. Powers