

Bottled Water Problems in California

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Bottled Water Bill Passes California State Assembly, Moves to Governor For Approval

Sacramento, California—In an era of increasing water scarcity, the California Assembly overwhelmingly passed AB 2275, a bill to protect the public's right to know how its water is being allocated. The bill, which is authored by Assembly member Felipe Fuentes, is now before Governor Schwarzenegger for his approval.

“California is facing a serious water crisis and in order to promote efficient water management, we need to know how our water is currently being allocated,” said Wenonah Hauter, executive director of Food & Water Watch. “Assembly Bill 2275, authored by Assembly member Fuentes, tackles a part of this problem as it would require public disclosure of the source and volume of California's water that is bottled by corporations at over 112 bottling plants. While over 1 billion gallons of bottled water are annually sold in California it is unknown how much bottled water is exported from California.”

Earlier in the year the California Department of Public Health opposed the bill citing the information it required bottling companies to disclose as “confidential business information.” That edict came mere weeks after the Schwarzenegger administration ordered the state's Department of Water Resources to take immediate action to address the state's “serious drought conditions and water delivery limitations.”

“Now more than ever during this drought season communities need reliable and accurate information about the water being extracted from local aquifers,” said Assembly member Fuentes.

Governor Schwarzenegger has until September 28 to ratify the bill. Until then, it remains to be seen whether he will support the rights of consumers and the vitality of the state’s environmental resources, or if he will side with corporate interests keen on exploiting those resources for profit.

“As the Governor has rightly called on citizens to use water responsibly, he should also promote responsible water management in State government. AB 2275 would provide the information to make responsible water management possible,” remarked Hauter.

Food & Water Watch is a nonprofit consumer rights organization that challenges the corporate control and abuse of our food and water resources. Visit www.foodandwaterwatch.org.