



## *PROTECT WATER AS A PUBLIC GOOD*

The CWL National theme for this year is Care for our Common Home. Provincially we have been focused on the fresh water resources of Ontario. In response to this call the Environmental Committee of the St. John the Divine CWL has been looking into the need to protect our fresh water supply in Ontario. Through our research we have determined the following points.

**Water sustains life** and as such should be considered a human right.

When water becomes a commodity with the goal for profit, it results in poor care of it, price gouging and no care to ensure all have access. **Clean and fresh water is a gift for all of us. Fresh water is a limited resource.** 71% of the planet is covered in water but only approximately 25 % of this water is fresh and only 1 percent of that water at most is accessible to the 7 billion people who need to use it.

**Groundwater must be seen as a public good, not a commodity.** We need to look at how “for profit companies” use this precious resource and encourage them to review their processes to obtain maximum efficiency. Currently there is little restriction of water use and a lack of oversight to ensure companies abide by restrictions that are in place. **Local ecosystems must be preserved for the well-being of future generations.** Urbanization, poor planning and a lack of government investment can contribute to a municipality’s water management infrastructure crumbling. There is also a need to monitor the climate change impact on the local water systems. **A poll commissioned by Wellington Water Watchers found that two-thirds of respondents support phasing out bottled water in Ontario over the course of a decade.** Wellington Water Watchers is a non-profit organization founded in 2007 dedicated to the protection, restoration and conservation of drinking water in Guelph and Wellington County. They are committed to the protection of local water and to educating the public about threats to the watershed. This volunteer group was created in part to protest the Nestlé Company taking water from their watershed. As stated on their website Nestlé profits from the sale of millions of litres of Ontario water it takes and bottles every year essentially for free. It is also important to learn from the tragedies in other countries the results of the misappropriation of water in the goal for profit. **The Blue Communities Project** launched by the Council of Canadians and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, designates municipalities Blue Communities when municipal governments pass resolutions to ban bottled water from municipal facilities, recognizing water as human right and promoting public not-for-profit water and sanitation services.

We urge you to take action and work with others in the community to do the same. For further information on how you can help, please contact Colleen Kelly [colleenvkelly@gmail.com](mailto:colleenvkelly@gmail.com) or Jane Williams [janeandowen@sympatico.ca](mailto:janeandowen@sympatico.ca).

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