



Farmington River Watershed Association, Inc.

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February 22, 2016

Comments to Bloomfield Town Council Regarding Niagara Water Bottling Plant

FRWA is not taking a position on the sale of water by MDC to a business customer in Bloomfield, but this should not be construed to mean that FRWA supports the details or the process of the deal struck with Niagara in Bloomfield.

FRWA opposes the secretive manner in which the negotiations between Niagara and both the MDC and the Town of Bloomfield were conducted. If decisions about an essential resource like a town's drinking water are not conducted transparently, the result is what we have now: elected officials and the water utility being accused of a breach of public trust. The MDC and town governments are frequently criticized by their constituents, whether they deserve it or not. That doesn't excuse them from making an effort to inform the people they serve, while there's still time for public debate.

FRWA opposes price breaks for large consumers of water, even for a company in the business of re-selling the water. The price breaks are inconsistent with pricing structures that encourage water conservation. Niagara's cost of purchasing MDC's water and sewer service should be comparable to that of other customers, and the cost should be passed along to their bottled water customers.

FRWA strongly advocates that questionable uses of our state's drinking water should be addressed in the state water plan that is now being developed. If, for example, the bottling and re-sale of our public water supply is not in the public interest, then we should seek to control it via town policy, new regulations, or new legislation.

Lastly, FRWA continues to advocate augmenting the flow to the East Branch of the Farmington River by releases from Barkhamsted Reservoir so as to better support aquatic life in the East Branch. This is especially true as long as the MDC states that it has a surplus of salable water in Barkhamsted Reservoir.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eileen Fielding". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Eileen Fielding
Executive Director