



## Every Vote Does Matter

Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation is a 501c3 non-profit grassroots organization. We take no government or corporate money. We also do not endorse, advocate for or contribute to the campaigns of any persons running for office. We **do** take it as our mission to educate and advocate for water conservation. We seek to hold our elected officials accountable for enforcing the law, enacting laws that protect water, doing their public trust duties as outlined in our constitution, and genuinely working on behalf of the people. We expect justice to prevail, treaties to be followed, issues of pollution, privatization and plunder to be addressed.

Since our inception in 2000, we have been forced to use the courts more than we have been able to count on the other branches of government to address water conservation issues of concern to our members. It shouldn't have to be this way. The Great Lakes State of Michigan should be able to count on its elected officials to generate laws and enforce policies that result in clean water for all at affordable prices, protection of our abundant natural resources for future generations and meeting of the real needs of ecosystems as well as people. Officials who would represent us should hold the view that water is sacred and essential to life and therefore must remain in the commons under the protection of the public.

Our votes count now more than ever as catastrophic climate change looms on our horizon. We encourage our members to help educate all candidates for office on the water issues that matter most to us. Attend their forums and appearances. Ask them questions about their stance on our issues. Make them declare their positions publicly so that the voters can see who they are and prepare to vote based on more than glitzy ads that essentially say nothing, or negative assaults designed to hide true intentions.

Demand real commitments. What will they do if they are elected at the local, state or national level? How will they make sure that the assaults on our waters stop and restoration begins? Will they shut down Line 5? Will they make polluters pay for clean up at the local level? Will they stop the corporate grabs of our groundwater and fix the infrastructures needed to deliver clean water to all our citizens? Will they fix the flaws in state laws and enact legislation that serves people before profits for large corporations? Will they honor the human right to water? Will they stop the injection of toxic wastes into the ground below our aquifers? Will they restore the revenue sharing money that can fix crumbling infrastructure in our cities? We have a right to demand answers to these questions.

Then make sure you and your neighbors get out and vote for those who meet your needs and will serve you. Every election makes a difference in terms of our ability to meet our water conservation goals. We have more work to do now than ever before. Let's elect people who will help us do that work for our children, no matter which party they represent.

—MCWC Board

## Legal Challenges Creeping Forward



Since the **Petition for a Contested Case Hearing on the Nestle permit** was filed May 30, 2018, the case has been proceeding through the administrative law court at the MDEQ and is being attended to by our attorneys. The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians filed at the same time and the files have been joined. We are both represented by Olson's law firm. There is a tentative schedule put forth by the judge which has required alteration from the start due to the sluggish pace of document preparation at the DEQ. They claim there is such a mountain of data they are required to present to us that their computer system can't handle it. So they dribble a bit at a time for our team to review.

We expect that much of what we get will be as useless as the FOIA materials we paid for a year ago, but we will have to review them nevertheless. We do not think the real data required by law to grant such a permit even exists as it was never produced in the first place. We shall see. It took the DEQ two years to extract enough paper from Nestle to believe it could justify the permit. We are contesting the existence and the validity of that data, and therefore the legality of the permit granted by the DEQ.

We thank our generous members and donors for their contributions to the legal costs of this challenge to date. We will be continuing fundraising efforts as the case progresses into next spring.

Our **Petition for a Contested Case Hearing on the Michigan Potash Company's 11 injection well permits** is just in the beginning stages of the process. It is before the same administrative law court at the MDEQ but likely a different judge. We do not really have a schedule for that one yet. It is a more complicated case because it involves laws related to mining and minerals under a different division within the DEQ that is covered by secrecy blankets, as well as several environmental laws also applicable to the Nestle case. This case is of great concern to us as the Potash Company intends to use 1200 gallons of fresh water per minute to dissolve the minerals and then inject the resulting brine back into the ground at the site in the middle of sensitive wetlands. The site is 8 miles from Nestle's operation in Ewart.

The company has already dug three water wells in an attempt to find the needed amount of water. So far they have not found enough and are digging a fourth well. Contrary to their stated intention of using "fossil water" from a great depth, they are in fact digging at the same level as the neighboring wells of property owners in the area. We are of course concerned for our members living in the area as well as the entire Muskegon River Watershed which will be affected by this ill conceived operation. The MDEQ clearly did no environmental impact studies prior to granting these permits and allowed the company to submit old data from a previous attempt by another company to mine this area. We had no choice but to contest such blatant violations of due diligence on the part of the department.

Fundraising for this legal action is proceeding also. We are asking our donors and members to indicate on their donations if they want the money to support either of the challenge legal funds, or if they just want donations given to our general fund for all our operations.

—Peggy Case

## Now Enbridge Gets a Tunnel? No way!



Years of studies, advisory boards, public protest, public relations grandstanding, and endless media attention have finally resulted in a decision by our term limited Governor. A deal has been struck with Enbridge which allows the Canadian pipeline company to build a tunnel under the Straits of Mackinaw to deliver large amounts of tar sands oil to refineries in Sarnia. Enbridge is to build the tunnel and it is to be owned and maintained by the Mackinac Bridge Authority.

The Authority was not involved in these negotiations and its sole function has been to maintain the bridge. No one asked them if they wanted to take on a tunnel too. The construction would take from 7 to 10 years. The oil would continue to flow through the old pipes until it is finished. It's hard to imagine a riskier solution to the problem of the aging, corroding Line 5. But it does give Enbridge a way to get what it has wanted all along - another bigger highway through Michigan for tar sands oil. They already got one after the Kalamazoo oil spill running through the lower part of the state, but that is apparently not enough. Thus a tunnel.

This is not a done deal yet. Enbridge is still studying the deal offer and has not actually agreed to the terms. The Bridge Authority is set to look at it for the first time. It is quite possible they will not be interested in taking on this massive and quite risky enterprise. It is possible that the State of Michigan will come to its senses and pay attention to the will of the majority, which has been demanding that the line simply be decommissioned and shut down. Along with the rest of the Oil and Water Don't Mix Coalition, we will continue to demand - **NO TUNNEL, SHUT LINE 5 DOWN.**

—Peggy Case



## Wild Turkeys to the Rescue

The Pere Marquette Chapter of the Wild Turkey Hunters Association has had to close its doors due to lack of young members able to take up the reins of leadership. MCWC Board member Jim Maturen has led this chapter for many years as it worked to return a wild turkey population to Michigan and dealt with a number of other conservation issues. The chapter is

disbursing remaining funds to conservation non-profits and has chosen to grant MCWC a very welcome gift of \$10,000. We are very grateful and will use it well in our own efforts at conservation.

—Board of Directors

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## Board Changes

Any board of directors is a fairly fluid thing, with members coming and going as lives get complicated and new priorities emerge. MCWC is no different. Five years ago we had five board members. A year ago we had 11. We are now operating with a total of 9. The board is really our staff, unpaid and overworked, but very passionately involved in the work of MCWC and the water protection our mission addresses. Often those who serve continue to work with the organization as active members after board service.

We therefore thank Pam Gilbert, Karen Turnbull, and Jeff Ostahowski for their service to MCWC as board members and wish them well either in their healing or their pursuit of other responsibilities and interests. We welcome their continued support in our work.

We would like to welcome a new board member this month. Jennifer Fassbender has been working with the People’s Water Board and the Coalition to Oppose the Expansion of US Ecology in Detroit. Her talents and enthusiasm give us added strength in our work to connect the dots between the water grabs of Nestle and the water justice issues in Detroit and Flint.

—Peggy Case



*About Jennifer Fassbender*

A Michigan native, Jennifer Fassbender lives in Detroit, where she is a climate justice activist and water warrior. Active with People’s Water Board and the Coalition to Oppose the Expansion of US Ecology, Jennifer organizes with Moratorium Now!, a coalition that works on water shutoffs and foreclosures. She also spends her time as an artist and tries to be in nature as often as possible. While spending 15 years in California, she earned a bachelors in Environmental Studies and minor in Geography at San Francisco State University and has associates degrees in Social Sciences, Studio Art and Art History. She is a bicycle commuter and has a passion for long distance cycling, where she has toured Hawaii’s Big Island, Iceland, California and Michigan’s U.P. As an environmentalist, she eats a plant based diet, striving to have the smallest footprint on the Earth as possible.

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**Leaders demand an end to Detroit Shut-offs**

On October 4th, over 250 people attended a water ceremony and press conference in downtown Detroit, led by Faith Leaders from around the Detroit Metropolitan area and organized by Detroit People’s Water Board. Faith leaders spoke of the immorality of water shut offs, urging city leaders to turn water back on for thousands of Detroiters, put a halt to future shutoffs, and to implement an income-based water affordability plan, originally proposed in 2005. This delegation also targeted other faith leaders, beyond the 200+ that have signed on, to join them and declare that water is a human right.



This protest was necessary as Mayor Duggan and the Great Lakes Water Authority are responsible for cutting off the water to tens of thousands of Detroiters over the last three years, even those who are just pennies behind on their bill. With Veolia as a consultant in Detroit, it is not surprising that the people of Detroit have lost control over their water department. Power has shifted to the suburbs and the move toward privatization continues. The People’s Water Board continues to shine a spotlight on this issue. MCWC is part of this coalition and we ask our members to urge faith leaders from around the state to speak up for the human right to water.

—Jennifer Fassbender

## Protest Against Lead in the Water at Detroit Public Schools

Parents, teachers and community activists rallied against the lead poisoning of children at a community forum at the Dexter Elmhurst Center in Detroit on October 2nd. At least 60 people came to protest lead in the water pipes of two thirds of the roughly 100 Detroit public schools and the poisoning of 50,000 mostly Afro-American children who have been drinking the water. This followed several official meetings held by the school board to field questions and concerns of hundreds of teachers, parents and community residents.

The board took its time to release the results of the lead tests taken last spring and only did so a week before the opening of the schools. The new school superintendent shut down the water fountains in the public schools and temporarily replaced them with water coolers and water bottles. At a recent meeting, the board voted to install hydration systems in all public schools by fall of 2019.

It was pointed out by activists that if the water infrastructure going to the public schools is old and deteriorating, then the pipes leading to homes and the 90 charter schools must be leaching lead as well. Detroit needs far more than filtration systems in its public schools, though this is a positive step.



The water pipes were constructed with lead throughout the Midwest as far back as the 1800s. These pipes, which bring water into residents' homes, schools, churches and mosques are old and decaying and in need of replacement. Already the children of Flint, Washington DC, Baltimore and many other school systems across the country have been poisoned from leaded water pipes in the

schools. This is not an unknown or unsolvable problem.

Hundreds of studies have documented that lead poisoning causes permanent learning and behavior problems and damage to nerves and kidneys. It's a preventable illness. The decaying infrastructure - from leaded water pipes to lead in old homes must be rebuilt. The mass poisoning of children of color and the poor must end. All children deserve safe, clean water in their schools.

—Diane Weckerle

Time to renew memberships if you haven't already done so. We depend almost entirely on our members to continue the work. As you may know, donors who have given us contact information are considered members also and receive the newsletter. We are always looking to sign up more. See the form below. You now have the option of directing your dues and donations to one of the two legal funds we have created to pay for our challenges to the MDEQ. Funds not earmarked go into the General Fund.



**Michigan Citizens for  
Water Conservation**

**Become a Member**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership/Donation Level:**

Student (\$10) \_\_\_\_\_

Individual (\$25) \_\_\_\_\_

Family (\$50) \_\_\_\_\_

Wetland Donor (\$100) \_\_\_\_\_

River Watershed (\$250) \_\_\_\_\_

Great Lakes Donor (\$500) \_\_\_\_\_

**Titled Donations Dedicated to:**

Nestle Legal Fund \_\_\_\_\_

Potash Legal Fund \_\_\_\_\_

General Fund \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form and your check to: *Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation, P.O. Box 1, Mecosta, MI 49332*



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John McLane  
Jim Maturen  
Diane Weckerle  
Shannon Abbott  
Ken Ford  
Jennifer Fassbender

info@SaveMiWater.org

*Help preserve natural resources—recycle this newsletter by sharing it with a friend!*

*We are Water Protectors and invite you to join us*

Your Donation and Membership is how we fund our organization.

MCWC is A 501c3 grassroots group organized in December 2000. Our mission is to protect our surface and ground waters from pollution, plunder and privatization through education, advocacy and actions. We work to protect and promote human and ecosystem rights to water and defend the public trust doctrine. All staff are volunteer. Your donation is tax-deductible.

Please send your check to P.O. Box 1, Mecosta, MI 49332

Or pay via our Website: [www.saveMiwater.org](http://www.saveMiwater.org)

**Please help support MCWC as we continue to support communities through research, information distribution, and coalition building.**

**Together, we can help to stop the privatization and commodification of our natural water resources.**

**Water is Life.**

**HELP BY DONATING TODAY**

