



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MICHIGAN

EDUCATING AND ADVOCATING FOR RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

February 27, 2017

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Office of Drinking Water and Municipal Assistance
P.O. Box 30241
Lansing, MI 48909-7741

RE: Nestle Waters North America MSDWA application

The League of Women Voters of Michigan opposes Nestle's water withdrawal request for the well at White Pine Springs, Osceola County, PW 101. Nestle's multiple requests for small incremental increases had put them under the radar for a public comment period until they finally exceeded the 200,000 gallons per day, triggering the Safe Drinking Water Act review. Our organization believes that public understanding and cooperation are essential to the responsible and responsive management of our state's natural resources. The public has a right to participate in decision-making at each phase in the process. When the Department approved the withdrawal rate of 400 GPM in January, 2016, there should have been a comment period for such a controversial action. The Department should make an effort to develop readily understandable procedures for public involvement and to ensure that the public has adequate information to participate effectively. Reports involved with this decision were not posted in a timely manner. This process has been difficult for the applicant as well as the public to navigate. Extensive publicity should be readily available in a timely manner. Hearings should be held in easily accessible locations.

Michigan set the example in water management with our water withdrawal assessment tool. But we now see that there has been 123 failed requests this year, requiring special review and approval. It may be time to review the science and update the computer modeling technology. Users like farms, parks and golf courses which use water onsite and return it to the watershed should be treated differently from water bottlers, consumptive users sending a product outside the watershed.

The League of Women Voters of Michigan believes that increased withdrawals for agricultural or municipal use within the basin should be carefully evaluated and monitored before being permitted. We oppose new or increased diversions of water to a place outside the basin.

Thank you this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Judy Karandjeff, President
League of Women Voters of Michigan