

Carol Gregor
Brooksville

Good morning,

I have written to Sandy Matheson, Executive Director of Maine retirement system about my concerns specifically related to the State Investment position regarding water and Nestle.

After receiving a response from Sandy I was compelled to speak today regarding the ethical underpinnings of our approach to the rich natural resources Maine has and the business approach now used in our State and specifically pension funds and business.

In response the letter from Sandy states

We cannot invest pension funds, or divest specific stocks such as Nestle, using social or environmental principles as an exclusive investment decision factor. This is because pension assets are held in trust funds, and as trustees, we have a legal responsibility to manage the investments for the sole benefit of funding retirements.

This means we cannot make investment decisions based solely on environmental preferences or principles such as the one you are requesting.

Sandy

Let me repeat, "The sole benefit of funding retirements do not necessarily include social or environmental principles.

I must ask, at what cost? When did our economics forget our need to protect our environment for life itself?

The system of life is connected, in the world, all of nature is dependent on all of nature, there is never a separation. The life giving nature of water, once disturbed, leaves land and life barren as seen throughout the world. The scientists and Army Corp have done more damage than is possible to imagine disturbing organically attached Eco systems that depend on the survival of each other. The extraction of water is catastrophic to the survival of life.

And Dr Paul Farmer speaking about Haiti's water management by the army corp, "Everything you touch matters" as entire communities were destroyed by this short sighted view of nature. Poverty and extinction resulted.

Fritchof Capra and Pope Francis explains

30. Even as the quality of available water is constantly diminishing, in some places there is a growing tendency, despite its scarcity, to privatize this resource, turning it into a commodity subject to the laws of the market. Yet access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights."

It is time to give natural resources the same rights awarded corporations and this is to also have human rights. No business or individual ethically has the right to profit from damaging any part of the natural system. To protect the interconnections of life systems. It is time for Maine to not allow natural resources, that are irreplaceable, to be sold off to benefit a few. It is time to stop destroying our earth and to make businesses a part of healthy and life sustaining solutions.

Leadership to manage climate change should suggest investment use of our lands and winds, ocean and farms for a strategic solution to prepare for the future. Taking our water out of its natural order environmentally is not based on good science or future success. We must shift our existing abuses towards a healthy and sustainable future and give nature human rights, now.