

Stephanie Bartusis  
Denmark  
LD 1111

Greetings Senator Lawrence, Representative Ziegler and EUT Committee Members. My name is Stephanie Bartusis; I live in Denmark, ME. I am testifying in support of LD 1111 "An Act Concerning Contracts and Agreement for Large-Scale Water Extraction"

My fiancé, Cliff, and I moved to Denmark, the town, ecosystem, and water that raised him. The water, the soils, the creatures great and small here infused him with a deep appreciation, respect, and responsibility to be a steward of the web of life with this place. We are growing food and taking care of the forest we have the privilege and pleasure to live with.

That said, a rather sour spectre haunts this town, and that is Denmark's toxic relationship with Poland Spring, who steals under contract, up to one hundred million gallons of water each year. Poland Spring pumps the pristine water, siphons its life into plastic, and trucks it all over the country under a brand it has no real responsibility to protect. Even if each bottle were only one dollar, that is one hundred million dollars a year that Poland Spring takes from the ground here. There is little opportunity for the residents here to affect a different dynamic with this parasitic water extraction. That is because the contract is on a 5 year renewal basis and the select people, whose interests regarding Poland Spring are not publically transparent, make the final decision to renew the contract.

With the climate changing, and prolonged droughts becoming more common, and snowpack not as abundant as previous, it is unacceptable that a remote company has this kind of control over this community's most precious living "resource". This resource being not only the basis for not only the tourism economy here, yet life itself. We can say "No Farmers, No Food" all day, yet No water, No Anything.

I implore this legislative group to consider life with the long view. Protecting and democratizing the water in Maine will perhaps be the most important decision you make considering what is at stake for our communities here and now, and our future generations to come.

In Denmark, a paltry gift to light up the baseball field is a slap in the face to the children of Maine from a company with zero interest in their future well-being, which is priceless, a company with self-interest to drain the lifeblood of this land and exchange the future for abstract dollar symbols.

As the state slogan "Dirigo" "I lead" and being on the land of The People of the Dawn, where the star that is the sun first illuminates and bursts the dew of the dark star studded nights, can we please lead by example with each step rooted in: love, empathy, justice, and the spirit of cooperation to walk a path with back turned to privatization and profit? Can we walk a path on a journey towards a world where the water that sustains and connects us all can join us at the table where we can dream a healthier world for all, together?

Thank you,  
Stephanie Bartusis, farmer.