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Sent: July-30-21 3:19 PM

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Subject: Ban Water Bottling of our Groundwater

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Mayor and Councillors:

In 2019, UBCM members passed a resolution asking the provincial government to stop approving licences for the bottling and commercial sale and bulk export of groundwater. The provincial government ignored that resolution and continues to approve licences and entertain applications for water bottling of our groundwater. I find that appalling, that the Provincial Government, elected by the people of BC ignore a legitimate request from the elected members of BC's communities. BC's Water Act prohibits bulk export of water, yet corporations are taking advantage of a loophole in the law to export water in smaller containers, but in quantities that should qualify as bulk export. I have been working with community groups around BC and with a team from the Environmental Law faculty at UVIC to create a document detailing our water situation (*attached) and calling for a ban on water bottling, or at the very least a moratorium on bottling. (<https://www.freshwateralliance.ca/ban-bottling-bc> Our province is being severely impacted by climate change. Wildfires are destroying our forests, and in fact endangering and destroying towns and cities and peoples' homes. There are **12 regions** currently experiencing **Stage 4** drought, and **5** more regions experiencing **Stage 3** drought, out of **32 drought monitoring regions**. (<https://governmentofbc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=838d533d8062411c820eef50b08f7ebc> The extreme heat dome at the end of June brought record hot temperatures to communities all over BC, causing premature snowpack and glacier melt, bringing serious flooding to several areas. The longer-term effects of that premature melt mean that there will be no snowpack and less glacier melt later in the season to provide normal water supply for the watersheds of BC, bringing even more widespread drought to those communities who depend on that melt for their drinking water. Yet, the government responds to the UVIC submission by saying, "We are not considering a moratorium, but we are aware of concerns". **That is not good enough!!!** We are being overwhelmed by evidence of climate change, and we are already seeing serious issues with water shortages, yet the government dismisses that evidence, takes no action and continues to "give our water away" to a few select corporations to bottle and sell for huge profits, often exporting that water out of the country while the people of BC wonder and worry about whether we will have enough water to live our daily lives. The people of BC are facing the highest level of water restrictions while the favoured corporations with water extraction licences continue to pump water from our

aquifers at full capacity. We need our government to step up and take action to protect and conserve our water from the water bottling companies as a major step to ensuring our water security for the future. Many BC communities are currently threatened by water bottling applications and proposals.

ACTION ITEM:

Please add your voices to the call for the provincial government to heed the will of the people and enact the 2019 UBCM resolution and take action on the UVIC Water for the Future submission document.

Thank you for taking action to help protect our water.

Bruce Gibbons
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*PROVIDED UNDER SEPARATE COVER
