

Save Our Groundwater

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NEWS

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Editors, New Directors: Denise Hart, Save Our Groundwater board member is available for comment.

SAVE OUR GROUNDWATER REMARKS ON THE JULY 1ST EXPIRATION OF USA SPRINGS, INC.'S LARGE GROUNDWATER WITHDRAWAL PERMIT

BARRINGTON, NH – Save Our Groundwater (SOG), the Seacoast grassroots organization that proved people have the power to impact the law and make lasting changes, is still around to savor the day the USA Springs, Inc. large groundwater withdrawal permit expired July 1.

“This long-contested plan to bottle community water in little plastic bottles and ship it to Europe for sale is at last no longer a threat to the health and well-being of our communities and ecosystems,” said Denise Hart, SOG board member.

“People have the power if they just choose to use it,” said Pat Newhall, one of the original, and current SOG Board of Directors.

SOG formed in August 2001 as a result of community concerns about a large groundwater permit application to withdraw more than 400,000 gallons of water a day from an aquifer system underlying Nottingham and Barrington. In the course of its thirteen-year history two additional organizations sprang up, the Neighborhood Guardians with a focus on the Town of Nottingham’s process in the case and the Nottingham Water Alliance focused on community rights. “One of the unique aspects of our civic engagement is that all three organizations continued to work collaboratively, sharing information and latest developments,” said Hart. “We began as neighbors first. We also reached out to our local officials and state legislators from the very beginning, engaging them in the issues of water conservation and sustainability. We persisted over 13 years and never gave up trying to stop this effort to privatize and remove the water.”

“We are pleased to see the many improvements to New Hampshire’s groundwater law, which in 2001 was a very new and untested piece of legislation,” noted Hart. “New Hampshire was, to the best of our knowledge, the only New England state to have a law protecting groundwater at that time. Our state’s foresight in this area became the model legislation for other states.” Legislators made numerous improvements to the state groundwater law, RSA485-C, in subsequent years due in large part to many of the concerns raised by residents in the USA Springs Inc. case. Public hearings are now a mandatory part of the process for obtaining a large groundwater withdrawal permit. Permits, when issued, are only valid for five years in order to better reevaluate community and environmental impacts, a significant improvement to the ten-year permits allowed in 2001.

For more information about Save Our Groundwater’s work and history, visit:
<http://www.saveourgroundwater.org> or write to them at saveourgroundwater@gmail.com.