

## Nestlé faces renewed criticism as B.C. drought continues

Posted by Joan Russow  
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### Companies like Nestlé will pay \$2.25 to bottle a million litres of water starting in 2016

By On the Coast, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 10, 2015 5:00 AM PT Last Updated: Jul 10, 2015 9:03 AM PT



Starting in 2016, Nestle will have to pay \$2.25 per million litres to extract water in B.C. (CBC)

Criticism against Nestlé is picking up momentum once again as drought plagues B.C., wildfires rage in parts of the south coast, and residents are facing water restrictions.

Nestlé Waters Canada bottles roughly 265 million litres of water from B.C. every year.

Starting in 2016, [it will have to pay \\$2.25 per million litres due to new regulations](#) .  
Currently the company and other corporations take the water for free.

- [Nanaimo, Parksville move to level 4 water restrictions with extreme drought conditions](#)
- [Nestlé B.C. water deal too cheap, says NDP](#)

"It's simply scandalous that a company like Nestlé can take hundreds of millions of litres of groundwater at basically pennies at the same time as other B.C. residents are being asked to conserve water because it's in the middle of a drought," said Liz McDowell, campaign director of an [online petition](#) opposing the new regulations.

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Nestlé Waters Canada defends its water use, noting it is not withdrawing water from rivers, lakes and streams that are currently affected by drought. Instead, the company draws its water from a groundwater aquifer, said corporate affairs director John Challinor.

"We withdraw less than one per cent of the available groundwater in the Kawkawa Lake sub-watershed," he said in a written statement.

"Each year we publicly report on our withdrawals and monitoring data in an annual hydrologic monitoring report. These reports conclude that Nestlé Waters Canada has had no negative impact on the Kawkawa Lake sub-watershed in the 15 year history of our operations."

The Kawkawa Lake sub-watershed is near the District of Hope, where stage four water restrictions are prohibiting outdoor water activities and watering of lawns.

### **Petition gathering thousands of signatures**

McDowell says the \$2.25-rate is much lower than those set in other parts of Canada. Her petition, which began earlier in the year and has now gained more than 160,000 signatures, is urging the B.C. government to set a much higher water rate to encourage conservation.

"In B.C., we're fortunate we do have groundwater reserves at the moment, but in California, after two, three, four drought years in a row, their groundwater reserves are actually running dry," she told *On the Coast's* Stephen Quinn.

"In B.C., right now we're in a position where we can actually stop and think responsibly and make sure we can preserve our groundwater for years to come."

McDowell says she will present the petition to Environment Minister Mary Polak once it reaches 200,000 signatures.

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***Listen to the interview:*** [\*Renewed criticism against Nestlé sparked by B.C. drought\*](#)