

In other countries, water is flowing into public hands

Contributed by Sophie Annan Jensen
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LAKE COUNTY – The Associated Press reports that some water utilities experts question why private companies would be interested in United States water utilities. Much of the country is in drought condition and the Environmental Protection Agency estimates the nation will need to spend \$277 billion or more over the next two decades to repair and improve drinking water systems.

“Shares of American Water Works have gained 9 percent since its initial offering April 23 ... In the same timeframe, shares of Aqua America Inc. shed 4 percent and shares of California Water Service Group slipped 7 percent,” the June 16 AP story said.

But the cities of Providence, RI, and Trenton, NJ are considering selling all or part of their systems to water corporations. <http://news.moneycentral.msn.com/provider/providerarticle.aspx?feed=AP&date=20080616&id=8782551>

In other countries, Inter Press Service reported June 23 that “Water is flowing back into public hands.” <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=42922>

The mayor of Paris said June 2 that the city will discontinue its 100-year-long contracts with the world's two biggest water service companies, Suez and Veolia, as of Dec. 31, 2009.

"We want to offer a better service, at a better price," Mayor Bertrand Delanoë said. "We also promise that prices would be stable."

The story adds “The list of ‘re-municipalisation’ of water services is long, and includes countries as diverse as Mali in West Africa, Uruguay where water has been brought back into the hands of the state at a national level, Buenos Aires and Santa Fe in Argentina, Cochabamba in Bolivia and Hamilton in Canada, besides other cities in France.”

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