

'WATER FOR THE WORLD' RESOLUTION INTRODUCED IN CONGRESS

[November 22, 2005] On March 17 2005, Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) and 29 co-sponsors introduced the Water for the World Resolution into the U.S. House of Representatives. This urgent resolution calls upon the government to recognize water as a global public good and fundamental human right in its trade, development and international financial policies.

Background: More than a billion of the world's inhabitants lack adequate access to safe drinking water, and 2.5 billion have no proper sanitation. Thousands, mostly children, die each day from preventable waterborne diseases. Because of increasing pollution and a rate of global water consumption that doubles every 20 years, 48 nations will face severe water shortages by 2025, according to the World Health Organization.

The Water for the World Resolution affirms that water is a global public good and should not be treated as a private commodity. It recognizes that government policies should ensure that all individuals have equitable access to water to meet basic human needs and that no one is cut off from water due to economic constraints. It states that U.S. Executive Directors of the IMF, World Bank and other international financial institutions should not approve loans requiring privatization when those policies result in reduced access to water and increased water rates; nor should trade agreements include negotiations related to the provision of water for human use.

In South Africa, pre-paid meters restrict poor township residents' access to clean water. Unable to pay, families drink from contaminated sources, such as polluted rivers, resulting in serious waterborne illnesses. Pre-paid meters were linked to a massive cholera outbreak in KwaZulu-Natal in 2000. Around the world, millions of dollars in World Bank and International Monetary Fund loans prop up water privatization schemes that do little to help those who need access to clean water.

By some estimates it will cost \$20 billion annually for the next 20 years to build, repair and maintain water systems in the United States. As a result, funding gaps lead local governments to turn systems over to private companies, where water is managed for a profit. In Detroit, MI., more than 50,000 people had their water shut off during the past two years because of their inability to pay.

There is an international consensus - enshrined in the United Nation's General Comment on the right to water and in the UN Millennium Development Goals - that water is a fundamental human right, and that access to water can mean the difference between sickness and health, cyclical poverty and economic development.

Urge your representative to co-sponsor H. Con. Res. 120, the Water for the World Resolution, right away!

By Phone: Call the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and they will put you through to your representative's office.

By Letter: Or write to your representative. You may find it helpful to use the following sample letter as a guideline:

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Washington, D.C. 20002, (202) 543-1126, www.pcusa.org/washington. For more information about the content of this article, please e-mail Catherine Gordon, at cgordon@ctr.pcusa.org. If you are not a member of SPL but would like to be, please click [\[here\]](#).

More than a billion people worldwide lack adequate access to safe drinking water. Thousands, mostly children, die each day from preventable waterborne diseases. I feel strongly our government must uphold and promote the principle that clean water for drinking and sanitation is a fundamental human right.

Water is a global public good. We must ensure everyone's access to it and by no means allow it to become a for-profit commodity, benefiting private sector control and those who can afford to pay.

I strongly urge you to co-sponsor immediately H. Con. Res. 120, the Water for the World Resolution.

Sincerely,