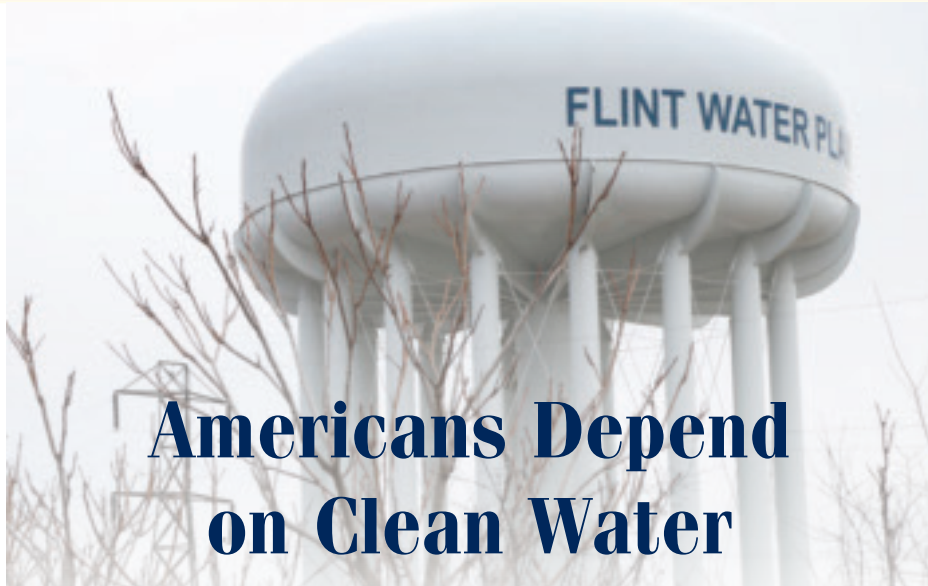




Vol. XLI, No. 2
MAR-APR 2016

Label Letter

Union Label & Service Trades Department, AFL-CIO



Americans Depend on Clean Water

Some 25 percent of all Americans depend on a for-profit source for their water supplies making the debacle in Flint a very repeatable possibility.

March 22 is "World Water Day," a day created by the United Nations to inspire people to take action and work toward ensuring all people have access to safe water and sanitation systems. Water is a basic human right, but right now, the United States water infrastructure is failing and access to clean water, what has been thought of as a third-world problem, is now a crisis in our nation.

Flint, Mich., and its highly publicized public health crisis stemming from its contaminated water system is just another example of the U.S.'s failing infrastructure and how private companies are using these tragedies to their advantage.

When the Flint's emergency manager used his power to switch the city from Detroit's water system to the polluted Flint River, the move had a negative impact on Detroit as well.

Since 2004, according to city records, the Detroit water system has operated with budget deficits that averaged \$57 million a year. Pulling Flint off its system – which was its biggest customer – exacerbated Detroit's problems and forced Detroit to raise its own customers' rates. The city began cutting off water to residents with unpaid bills while leaving bigger customers alone. It wasn't until national outcry and growing public scrutiny that the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) was forced to stop the shutoffs.

It was then recommended that the DWSD be privatized – creating a public-private partnership (P3) right out of the playbook of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). The same

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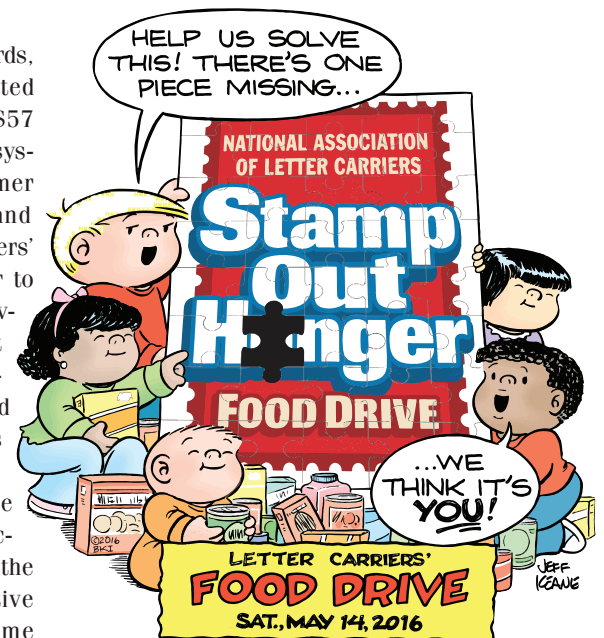
Delivering Hope

Every second Saturday in May, letter carriers in more than 10,000 cities and towns across America collect the goodness and compassion of their postal customers who participate in the NALC Stamp Out Hunger National Food Drive — the largest one-day food drive in the nation.

Led by letter carriers represented by the National Association of Letter Carriers (AFL-CIO), with help from rural letter carriers, other postal employees and other volunteers, the drive has delivered more than one billion pounds of food the past 24 years.

Carriers collect non-perishable food donations left next to mailboxes and in post offices and deliver them to local community food banks, pantries and shelters. Nearly 1,500 NALC branches in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



PUT YOUR NON-PERISHABLE DONATION IN A BAG BY YOUR MAILBOX. WE'LL DELIVER IT TO A LOCAL FOOD BANK.



Pet Supplies

We love our pets, they're family. A good diet and preventive health care is the best way to keep pets healthy and avoid big veterinary bills.

Union Plus offers pet programs to help protect your pets and your wallet. Get details about pet insurance benefits and how to enroll at UnionPlusPets.com or call 1-866-473-7387 (9 am–midnight ET and 10 am–8 pm ET on Saturdays).

When you're searching for things to buy for your pets—why not support unions and buy trusted products that are union-made?

Here's a brief list of pet products made by members of the **Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM)** and the **United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)**.

- Alpo
- Anchor
- Beggin' Strips
- Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc.
- Chew-Ezz
- Fancy Feast
- Fresh Step
- Friskies
- Litter Green
- Milk-Bones
- Nature's Recipe
- Purina Animal Feeds
- Purina Beneful
- Purina Cat Chow
- Purina Dog Chow
- Purina One
- Purina Pro Plan
- Purina Puppy Chow
- 9 Lives
- Sanderson Farms
- Science Diet
- Skippy
- Sausages
- Tidy Cat's

Editors note: as with all Do Buy lists this list does not include all available union-made products and services. We welcome your suggestions and invite you to add you union-made products to our online database at www.unionlabel.org.

WALK IN MY SHOES

Marcus Eubanks, United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 370 Flint, Michigan

I was in my daughter's kindergarten class a couple of years ago and I was talking to another parent at the school who happened to be an electrician and an IBEW member. He was telling me about the benefits of being a union member. He knew I was a welder and suggested I look into apprenticeship at UA.

Joining the UA as an apprentice meant that I would have to take a pay cut at first. That was a scary prospect. I have six kids, and I am the only breadwinner in the family. I had to do some soul searching but in the end, when the door opened for this opportunity, I jumped through.

As a second year apprentice, I work for Walter E. William, a mechanical services contractor and I attend school in the evenings to hone my skills.

I know being a union plumber will provide me and my family better opportunities in the future.

Beyond work, I have gotten the chance to use my skills and training to help others in my community. You see, I live in Flint, Michigan, where city officials admitted in October that our water contained unsafe lead levels that could make people sick. When the news first broke, I heard that the city was going to train some folks to go out and perform filter installations. Instead, with one phone call, UA Local 370 had almost 400 union plumbers volunteer to help. I'm one of them. Shoulder-to-shoulder, house-by-house we have installed filters, and in some cases faucets, in homes across Flint.



And, in every house we visit, we also check the type of pipes leading into the house. If they have lead or galvanized pipes, the house may need to have the main line replaced. We let the homeowner know which type of pipes they have, and we also tell the Department of Public Works since its records haven't been converted to computer files yet. What's going on in Flint is serious and it breaks my heart. I'm just glad that I can help.

I'm proud to be an apprentice at the UA Local 370, and I'm proud to be helping my community right now in its time of need.



SPOTLIGHT THE LABEL

National Association of Letter Carriers

The National Association of Letter Carriers is the sole representative of city delivery letter carriers employed by the U.S. Postal Service.

Since it was founded in Milwaukee in 1889, the NALC has had a long and distinguished history of defending the rights of letter carriers before abusive supervisors, unfair presidential administrations and indifferent Congresses. NALC is the only force that fights to protect the interests of city letter carriers.

The NALC is governed both by a constitution and by the will of delegates to NALC's biennial national conventions. For day-to-day operations, NALC's Executive Council leads the union. The Council is made up of 10 resident national officers: president, executive vice president, vice president, secretary-treasurer, assistant secretary-treasurer, director of city delivery, director of safety and health, director of retired members, director of life insurance and director of the NALC Health Benefit Plan. Three trustees are also on the Council, as are the national business agents who represent the union's 15 geographic regions.

But NALC's real strength, power and representation start at the local level with members belonging to more than 2,000 locals, known as branches, throughout the country. ■

Emsig Buttons, Union-Made-in-the USA

Members of UNITE HERE New England Joint Board Local 1036T manufacture Emsig Buttons in Putnam, Connecticut. Members make buttons for various clothing uses out of numerous materials including recycled, organic, and fire-retardant. This family-owned company proudly manufactures union-made-in-the-USA buttons for the US military.



NLRB

Sets 24-Hour Ban on Captive Audience Meetings Prior to Mail Ballot Elections

In January, the National Labor Relations Board significantly changed its rule governing when captive audience meetings in NLRB-conducted mail-ballot elections can be held. The ruling states that planned or unplanned captive audience meetings or discussions about unionization involving two or more employees at a time cannot be held 24-hours prior to the ballot mailing by an NLRB Regional Office. Both union and employers must abide this rule.

In 1953, in *Peerless Plywood Co., 107 NLRB 427*, the NLRB, in the context of a manual (in-person) election, ruled that mass captive-audience speeches by either party to the election ending within the 24-hour period prior to the start of such an election violated the National Labor Relations Act. Next, in *Oregon Washington Telephone Co., 123 NLRB 339 (1959)*, involving a mail-ballot election, the Board decided that its captive-audience meeting prohibition did not begin until the time and date the ballots are mailed to voters. In its latest move, in *Guardsmark, LLC*, the Board decided that, because the *Oregon Washington Telephone* mail-ballot election rule did not contain a 24-hour component, there was a “counter-intuitive difference”



between the rules in manual and mail-ballot elections that “invited confusion.” Therefore, the Board overruled *Oregon Washington Telephone*, adding a 24-hour requirement in mail-ballot elections “to align the mail-ballot rule more closely with the manual-ballot rule.”

As part of the pre-election procedure, the Regional Director notifies the parties of the date and time the ballots will be mailed. The Notice of Election issued by the Regional Director also will state the date and time the ballots will be mailed.

Stamp Out Hunger

DELIVERING HOPE *Continued from page 1*

Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands are involved.

The United States Postal Service, National Association of Letter Carriers, National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association, AFL-CIO, United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW), United Way, Valassis and Valpak Direct Marketing Systems are all supporting this year’s Stamp Out Hunger food drive.

To donate, just place a box or can of non-perishable food next to your mailbox before your letter carrier delivers mail on the second Saturday in May. The carrier will do the rest. The food is sorted, and delivered to an area food bank or pantry, where it is available for needy families.

With 49 million people facing hunger every day in America, including nearly 16 million children, this drive is one way you can help those in your own city or town who need help.

Do You Know Where Your Nabisco Treats are Made?

BCTGM members working at Nabisco plants throughout the U.S. take great pride in producing the iconic products that have been a part of millions of Americans’ lives for more than 50 years.

The BCTGM has launched a public education campaign encouraging Americans to “Check the Label” to support American jobs by ensuring their favorite Nabisco products are produced in America before purchasing.

Through a simple label check, together we can send a powerful message in support of American jobs and products by rejecting those made at poverty-level wages and in unregulated work conditions.

SUPPORT AMERICAN NABISCO WORKERS IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

1) Check the Label: There are two ways to know if your Nabisco snacks



are made in the U.S. or Mexico:

- Check for the words “Made in Mexico” under the ingredient list
- Check the plant identification code, which is part of the expiration date code: do not buy if the initials “MM” or “MS” are listed. The initials AE, AH, AP, AX, AZ and XL all indicate American-made products.

2) Tell your grocery or convenience store manager to only stock American-made Nabisco products.

Send a clear message to companies like this that we will not accept the outsourcing of good American jobs and the American middle class. Do not buy the snacks being produced by Nabisco/Mondelz in Mexico.

CHECK THE LABEL AND ONLY BUY AMERICAN-MADE.

U.S Needs to Reinvest in Infrastructure

Continued from page 1

argument the private sector has used to privatize other parts of public operations – greater efficiency and cost control – is being used to push to privatize water systems.

So far, DWSD remains in public hands, but approximately 25 percent of water systems in the U.S. are privatized. ALEC bills such as the “Establishing a Public-Private Partnership (P3) Authority Act” and the “Water/Wastewater Utility Public-Private Partnership Act” mandate that some public services be opened to bidding by for-profit corporations, and that the contract be awarded on a “lowest cost” basis regardless of other factors. ALEC’s “Environmental Services Public-Private Partnership Act” privatizes public water and sewage services and would prohibit local governments from requiring that contractors meet labor standards.

These model bills are still being pushed through legislatures throughout the country. In New Jersey, the Water Infrastructure Protection Act was passed last year, which bypasses citizen consent when a municipality decides to sell off its water system as long as policy makers can prove their system is deficient. Legislation currently sailing through the Wisconsin legislature is identical to the New Jersey

The failings of the nation’s water infrastructure and the austerity being practiced by municipal governments leave public water companies especially vulnerable to privatization efforts.

legislation. It will remove obstacles on the leasing of public water systems – also eliminating democratic safeguards against quick sales of systems while adding protections that favor the purchaser.

The failings of the nation’s water infrastructure and the austerity being practiced by municipal governments leave public water companies especially vulnerable to privatization efforts. Since the passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972, when federal monies were flowing into water infrastructure, funding has decreased 80 percent. A report from the Government Accountability Office estimates that small water utilities will need up to \$143 billion in infrastructure repairs in the near future.

According to proponents, privatization can provide much-needed capital to conduct the necessary repairs, but in places where privatization has occurred, there’s evidence that companies routinely put profits above people.

Veolia, a multi-national French corporation that controls water systems in many developing nations and in a few locations in the U.S., has been accused of deferring necessary maintenance of systems to keep labor costs low and failing to oversee systems properly. They’ve also been accused of unfair rate hikes and failure to encourage water conservation efforts.

In Indianapolis, Veolia was sued for breaking state contract law and for overcharging a quarter of a million residents. A grand jury subpoenaed four Veolia employees for allegations of falsifying water reports amid accusations by city and county officials that Veolia was skimping on staffing, water testing, maintenance and chemicals.

In the world of privatization, the claim that a corporation can be more “nimble” is a dog whistle word meaning that they are going to fail to employ enough people to respond to emergencies. Or that the personnel they do employ will be paid substandard wages resulting in high turnover and a lack of experience. Typically, according to Food & Water Watch, privatization leads to a loss of one in three jobs.

Environmental harm could be the result.

In December 2014, Fort Wayne, Ind., bought back its water system from Aqua America and paid a total of \$67 million after residents complained about low water pressure and hard water that damaged appliances. In another location, Aqua was found to have charged twice as much as comparable publicly owned utilities. For a typical household within a county, using 5,000 gallons a month, Aqua Utilities charged 105 percent more than comparable publicly owned utilities, which added up to an extra \$255 a year.

Prudent spending by municipalities and a reinvestment by the Federal government on water systems improvements could help communities avoid the pitfalls of privatization. The GAO recommends that municipal water systems practice better asset management – keeping track and prioritizing their systems’ needs. For example, in the case of Flint, Michigan there is little publicly observable evidence that any sort of asset management program was in place. No one is sure even how many lead service lines are in the city. Years of under-funding, a declining population, and neglect left the utility vulnerable to all sorts of problems, including the one that occurred.

Strong asset management practices could help communities shore up operations and create a safety net for avoiding predatory privatization.

The National Association of Water Companies, an organization that lobbies on behalf of private water companies like Veolia and Aqua America in Washington and throughout the country, claims that allowing private corporations to control public water is a solution that can provide the operational expertise and infrastructure investment necessary to prevent another Flint-like disaster. But that takes a public commodity and puts it into the hands of a private company, an untenable situation.

The U.S. needs to reinvest in its infrastructure to the levels necessary to maintain and improve existing systems. Municipal systems have an obligation to the public to provide safe and clean water to all citizens, with public accountability and oversight, not profits, being the only motivation behind its operations. Water is a basic human right.

EPI Report Highlights TPP Deficiencies

A recently released report from the Economic Policy Institute offers further data that the Trans-Pacific Partnership is fatally flawed.

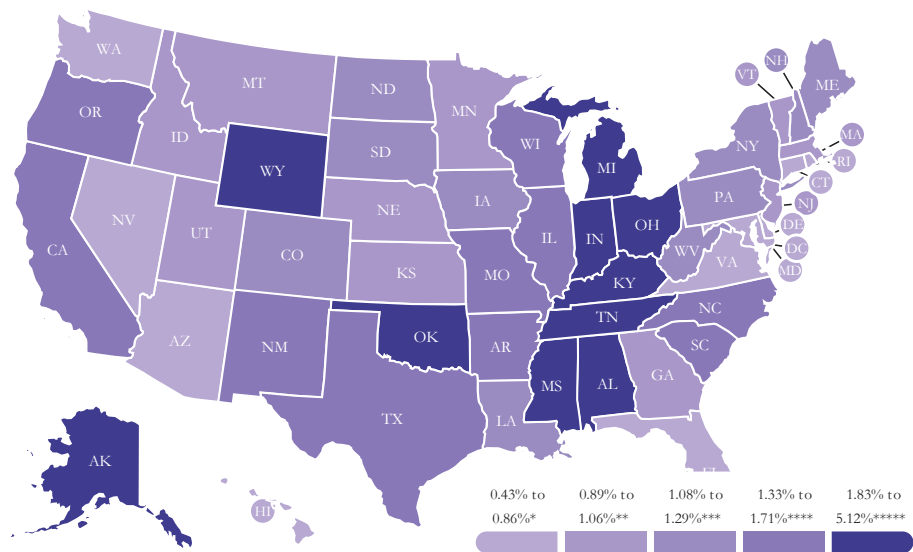
“EPI’s new report quantifies what a mistake it was to leave currency rules out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The trade deficit with TPP countries—attributable in large part to misaligned currency—cost America’s working families 2 million jobs in 2015, more than half in manufacturing,” said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka. “Omitting currency rules from the TPP benefits Wall Street, making the TPP a tool for off-shoring jobs, not for job creation. If Congress is waiting for more evidence that TPP is a bad deal, this is it.”

The 10 states hardest hit by trade deficits that the TPP won’t remedy are:

- Michigan (214,600 jobs lost, equal to 5.12%)
- Indiana (103,800 jobs, 3.54%)
- Kentucky (53,700 jobs, 2.92%)
- Alabama (46,000 jobs, 2.32%)
- Tennessee (61,000 jobs, 2.19%)
- Ohio (112,500 jobs, 2.16%)
- Mississippi (22,000 jobs, 1.86%)
- Oklahoma (35,300 jobs, 2.10%)
- Wyoming (6,800 jobs, 2.34%)
- Alaska (6,300 jobs, 1.83%)

Read the full EPI report online at: <http://www.epi.org/files/2016/tpp-jobs-final.pdf>.

Net U.S. jobs eliminated by U.S. trade deficit with TPP countries, by state, 2015 (as a share of total state employment).



*10 least impacted states, plus D.C.

**10 next least impacted states

***10 middle impacted states

****10 next most impacted states

*****10 most impacted states

Source: Authors’ analysis of Bivens (2014), U.S. Census Bureau (2013), U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS 2016a and 2016b), and BLS Employment Projections program (BLS-EP 2014a, 2014b, and 2015).

IAM Secures Legal Win Against AutoNation in Florida

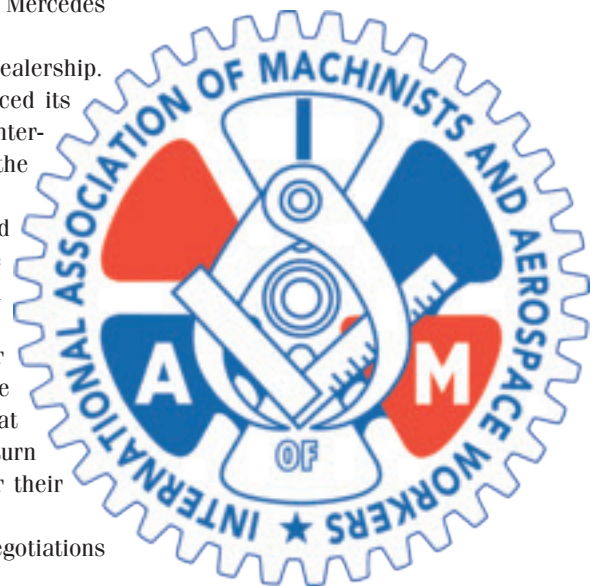
The IAM Southern Territory notched an important legal victory when the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals issued a blistering decision in the IAM’s favor against Mercedes of Orlando, an AutoNation company.

In 2008, the IAM won an election among Auto Technicians at the Florida Dealership. The company threw up appeal after appeal and last week the court announced its decision, finding multiple violations by the company, including surveillance, interrogation of employees, illegally firing employees and refusal to bargain with the union.

The ruling finds that the company owes substantial back pay to the fired workers. AutoNation will also have to post about the decision in every one of its over 200 dealerships nationwide and affirm they will not interfere with workers’ right to unionize.

“This is a huge victory for Auto Techs nationwide who want to better their lives,” said Southern Territory Organizing Leader Dave Porter. “Auto Techs have had their ability to earn a living chipped away by dealerships lowering the flat rate job times and the amount of money techs get per job. The only way to turn this around for them is by unionizing, and this decision is a turning point for their ability to collectively bargain and raise their real wages.”

Porter and IAM Automotive Coordinator Boysen Anderson are now in negotiations with Mercedes of Orlando for a first contract at the dealership.



PERIODICALS
POSTAGE PAID
WASHINGTON, D.C.

TIME VALUE

In This Issue...

Americans Depend on Clean Water	1
Do Buy—Pet Supplies	2
Walk in My Shoes	3
How to Tell if Your Oreo is Union-Made	4
IAM Secures Legal Win Against AutoNation	6
AFL-CIO National Boycotts	7

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EndNotes

By Rich Kline, *President, UL&STD*



Label Letter

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Water is a Human Right



If health care is a human right, then clean water is no less so. The two are closely intertwined.

Yet, from Flint, Michigan, to Hoosick Falls, New York, to Fresno, California and hundreds more cities and towns nationally, water supplies are polluted and dangerous. The resultant harm to health in children and adults is well documented. Yet, it takes a health and safety catastrophe, such as occurred in Flint's lead poisoning of children, to bring more than handwringing.

In other cities and towns, inadequate water supply systems threaten to cause health problems, raise the cost of water to homeowners and waste vast quantities of water through deteriorating antiquated pipes. One example of this problem is Washington, DC, which still utilizes some wooden water pipes and suffers significant water waste.

What can be done. If we recognize the criticality of clean water and the means to provide it, why are we not doing more to resolve the problem. This part of our infrastructure, if repaired or replaced, would bring immediate benefits to health, job growth and property values.

Members of the UA in Flint are working to help homeowners whose pipes have been damaged by the bad water a misguided emergency manager inflicted upon the city. These members should be honored for their public service, but the installation of faucets and filters is only a temporary band aid. The city of Flint will need to replace its aged lead and galvanized pipes that lead the water to area homes. Main lines will need to be replaced. An issue that extends far beyond the city of Flint and the state of Michigan.

Effort is needed on a State and Federal level. The richest country on the planet should not fail to provide its citizens a necessity of life, clean water. It is disgraceful that so much of our water is no better than that found in less developed countries and equally bad that we are wasting so much water through inefficiency.

The time to repair and rebuild the water infrastructure is now. But, instead of repairing our water infrastructure, states and cities across the U.S. are selling their water and wastewater services to the highest bidder. These for-profit companies falsely claim to run the public utilities better, cheaper and more efficiently. Privatization of public services causes costs to increase, and quality of service to decline. We can and should do better. Americans everywhere need clean drinking water. ■