

Public Outcry Forces Defeat of Controversial Water Bill

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Local Senator says backlash against the Republican proposal to allow an out-of-state corporation to buy and operate public water utilities in Wisconsin forced it to be removed from the Senate calendar.

MADISON - According to State Senator **Dave Hansen** (D-Green Bay), an outspoken opponent of the bill, widespread backlash against a bill that would make it easier to turn control of public drinking water over to out-of-state corporations led to the bill's apparent demise in the State Senate Friday.



"I was so happy to see the public outcry against this bill," said Hansen today. "Thanks to everyone who spoke out, the bill was removed from the Senate calendar and it looks to be defeated."

The controversial bill was introduced at the request of Aqua American, a Pennsylvania corporation that buys public water utilities to operate for profit. In many cases that has been a bad deal for residents in communities where Aqua America took over control of their drinking water.

In order to increase profits in some communities, Aqua America has fired staff, reduced quality and raised rates. One community saw their average water rate skyrocket from \$153 to \$707 an increase of 397%.

"Assembly Bill 554 was nothing more than a giveaway to Aqua America, a Pennsylvania corporation that wanted to gain control over Wisconsin's drinking water," said Hansen. "Clean water is one of our greatest assets and its protection should remain the responsibility of the public. It should not be sold to a faceless corporation that is only interested in making a profit

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from it. I'm glad so many agree and made their voices heard."

Legislative staffer Jay Wadd contributed to this story.