

The Honorable Fran Pavley  
Chair, Natural Resources and Water  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Fax: (916) 324-4823

**RE: Support AB 1242 (Ruskin-Jones)**

Dear Senator Pavley:

As a Unitarian Universalist who supports both environmental sustainability and human rights, I am writing to add my voice to the chorus of those in strong support for AB 1242 (Ruskin-Jones).

Access to clean, safe and affordable water is a fundamental human right essential to our health, the environment and the economy. California is one of the largest economies in the world, but from 1997 through 2001, nitrates were detected above regulatory standards in the drinking water supplies of more than 11.2 million Californians; the drinking water of 8.5 million Californians was subjected to five or more violations of the standard. Unfortunately, groundwater pollution means that these Californians in some of the poorest communities around the state, in the best case, pay more for their water to fund expensive treatment, and at worst, end up without safe drinking water because they cannot afford treatment and have no alternative water supply.

Nitrates, however, are not the only threat to community access to potable water. Pesticides, industrial chemicals, and some naturally occurring chemicals in high concentrations are also responsible for putting families at risk and forcing them to purchase bottled water. Bottled water is a poor substitute for safe, affordable, potable water. First, it is not economical. Families are paying up to 1,000 times more for bottled water and sometimes forgoing other necessities. Even with bottled water these families are forced to bathe and wash dishes with contaminated water.

More families who cannot pay their water bills, particularly in these hard economic times, risk losing their water service altogether. Unlike energy and phone service, there is no statewide lifeline water rate. If a family cannot pay their water bill they are at the mercy of their water service provider. Without basic water service families run the risk of being evicted from their homes because they are not living in sanitary conditions.

It is unconscionable that in a state as wealthy as California, families that cannot afford to purchase bottled water have no choice but to serve their families contaminated water. Parents are being forced to cook, wash dishes, and bathe their children in water they know is making their families sick. No family should be forced to make the heart-wrenching choices forced upon families that cannot afford such an essential resource.

AB 1242 establishes a right to water for basic human needs as a policy of the state of California. By doing so, and requiring that State Agencies comply, AB 1242 will ensure that future regulations, grant programs, and agency practices are designed to move California forward toward a day when everyone in California can safely fill a glass of water from their tap and drink it without fear of becoming sick.

Please help us to ensure that someday, every Californian will be able to confidently fill a glass of water from their tap and serve it to their families by voting aye on AB 1242 (Ruskin).

Sincerely,

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Signature

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Print Name

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Street Address

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City, State, Zip Code

cc: Assembly Member Ruskin