

Press Release August 24th 2015

**COMPLAINT FILED IN NAPA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT AGAINST
CRYSTAL GEYSER WATER COMPANY AND THE COUNTY OF SISKIYOU.**

After 2 years of attempting to work with local government agencies, the Mt. Shasta based W.A.T.E.R. (We Advocate Thorough Environmental Review) Group, a 501(c) 3 and a California not-for-profit Corporation, filed a “Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief” against Crystal Geysers Water Company and Siskiyou County. The complaint was filed in Napa County, the location of Crystal Geysers Water Company’s corporate offices.

It is W.A.T.E.R.’s intention to seek a fair and impartial hearing in the Napa County Court. Crystal Geysers Water Company and Siskiyou County continue to be disrespectful in attending to W.A.T.E.R.’s civil requests submitted in June to review its project elements, and continue to disregard W.A.T.E.R.’s attempts to meet with them and review their project’s deficiencies with a local, concerned citizenry.

Many involved citizens recently wrote to the Governor’s office about the issue of opening a bottling plant, extracting water and producing “value-added products” in Mt. Shasta during California’s historic and unprecedented drought. A response from the Governor’s office stated, “Due to the legal nature of your situation, the issue you wrote about falls outside of the Governor's jurisdiction. We encourage you to speak with an attorney who can inform you of the options available through the legal process, especially pertaining to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and enforcement of Environmental Impact Reports (EIR).”

Bruce Hillman of Mt. Shasta, speaking for the group, states, “If Crystal Geysers and the County government would work within the system properly, citizens and

agencies would have a chance to work together. This hasn't happened. Crystal Geyser continues to show no guardian care or interest in complying with the County Planning Ordinances.”

The complaint states Crystal Geyser Water Company's planned operation of a bottling facility for the processing of teas and other beverages, including the production of plastic bottles, is inconsistent with the Siskiyou County Zoning Ordinance and the Siskiyou County General Plan as the facility is located in a “Woodland Productivity” overlay, which designates the land for light-industrial use, not heavy-industrial use.

The complaint seeks a permanent injunction enjoining defendant Crystal Geyser Water Company from brewing tea, producing juice products and/or the production and manufacture of PET plastic bottles at the facility near Mt. Shasta, in Siskiyou County.

W.A.T.E.R. maintains that what was once a water bottling company, closed by Coca Cola in 2010, is now expanding the operation and facilities to include the production of juices and brewing of tea, found recently documented in required reporting to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board.

The lawsuit requests that the Court direct that Crystal Geyser Water Company and Siskiyou County follow county laws and ordinances before allowing Crystal Geyser to start their plastic bottle manufacturing/tea brewing/juice bottling operation located just outside the northern border of the City of Mt. Shasta. The lawsuit points out that the land in question has long been designated by the County's General Plan as a "Woodland Productivity" zone which specifically forbids heavy industrial uses such as plastic manufacturing, and non-spring water beverage brewing and mixing, all of which are planned by Crystal Geyser.

According to the lawsuit, the General Plan clearly specifies that Woodland Productivity land can only be permitted for "Single-family residential, light industrial, light commercial, open space, non-profit and non-organizational in nature recreational uses, commercial/recreational uses, and public or quasi-public uses...The complaint states, "The manufacturing of plastic products is not an allowable use in a light industrial zone. (Zoning Ordinance § 10-6-4602)."

Finally, the lawsuit claims that the Crystal Geysers' operations will violate the County's groundwater ordinances (Section 3-13.301), which provide that it is unlawful to extract groundwater for use outside the basin from which it was extracted without obtaining a written permit from the County. There is an exception to this ordinance for "the bottling or transporting of bottled water by a commercial water bottling enterprise." However, due to the types of products Crystal Geysers' operation is a not a water bottling facility as defined by state law governing the licensing and operations of water bottling facilities.

Raven Stevens of the Gateway Neighborhood Association, which includes 76 neighbors in close proximity to the proposed plant states, "Crystal Geysers Water Company continues to rely on old groundwater data and clearly new studies are necessary during this extreme drought. It's truly a shame that Siskiyou County and Crystal Geysers refuse to take the steps necessary to protect our neighborhood. Homeowners had water, noise and vibration issues during Coca Cola bottling days and no one was listening then, nor are they listening now. The leach field at the plant will again be dumping effluent from processing directly into our drinking water aquifer. Hundreds of homes in the surrounding area rely on domestic wells for their water supply. Also Crystal Geysers has just put two 20+ foot tall coolers or compressors outside the plant with room for a third one. The county deems this permissible without any concern to noise levels in the neighborhood. This is why we are taking a stand to get the Environmental Impact Report we deserve. We thank W.A.T.E.R. for taking this stand, not only for our

neighborhood but for our entire community.”

W.A.T.E.R. has determined that if the County moves forward with this project, the County must issue discretionary permits for the operation of the Mt. Shasta Crystal Geyser facility. At this point, Crystal Geyser must comply with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act, including the creation of a complete CEQA review of the proposed operation, including evaluation of all potential environmental hazards of the Crystal Geyser project, groundwater depletion and consequent threats to neighboring residential and city wells, noise, energy consumption, nighttime lighting, plastics fumes, toxic waste disposal, and truck traffic. Such an independent environmental review is necessary to protect the community against these hazards, to preserve the character and livability of this community, and to impose mandatory monitoring and regulation of the facility if and when it begins operation.

We Advocate Thorough Environmental Review (W.A.T.E.R.)

Contact Bruce Hillman or Roslyn McCoy for W.A.T.E.R. at (530) 918-8805 for further information.

Raven Stevens, Community Liaison for the Gateway Neighborhood Association can be contacted at 530-926-4339.

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