

Skyrocketing Water Bills in the US: Is Water The New Enron Scam? - Fake Crises, Fake Bills, And Fake Solutions

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"In places like Benton Harbor, Michigan and Detroit, there is something called the emergency manager, which essentially is a local dictator. He can depose the mayor and offer decrees and answer to no one except the governor. In these two cities and others, because they are lacking tax revenue (because of lack of industry) they are jacking up the water rates as much as 40%. ... One of the people who was leading the charge against this stuff was recently convicted in a kangaroo court in Benton Harbor and is now facing 20 years in prison. He is Reverend Pinkney." - Brandon Turbeville

"Little bitty Benton Harbor was the testing ground. It was the testing ground to see what they can get away with. ...It's comin' to your city next, whether you like it or not." - [Rev. Edward Pinkney](#)

Readers may [remember my past article](#) dealing with the apparent corruption regarding water rates in places like Dekalb County, Georgia. Electricity, Gas, Water. It's crucial that people be aware that they are not safe from those providing these services and necessities. They should know that their "government" can even move to take water from them.

But Dekalb County is not the only place in the United States where water rates and the restriction of access to water has become a significant issue. As the quotes above demonstrate, Benton Harbor, Michigan appears to be ground zero in the battle for access to water.

Reverend Pinkney had been, up until his recent conviction, leading the charge for the people of Benton Harbor. [As the World Austerity Report writes](#),

For years Reverend Edward Pinkney has been fighting the slow move to takeover, privatize, loot, and gentrify Benton Harbor. He has been fighting not only for the survival of his own city as well as Michigan state, but for his personal freedom.

Since 2003, Rev. Pinkney has endured prejudice by white juries and lawyers, been fined, jailed, released, put on probation, fined for exercising his first amendment rights, and jailed again. More recently, in true David and Goliath fashion, Rev. Pinkney had successfully gathered sufficient petitions to force a recall election of Mayor James Hightower. Pinkney warned that Hightower would use all his resources (Whirlpool Corporation, Sheriff Bailey, prosecutor Mike Sepic, and County Clerk Sharon Tyler, to name a few) against Rev. Pinkney. Unfortunately, the law means very little to those who wish to privatize

and asset strip public utilities, schools, roads, and even government.

Benton Harbor as well as Detroit and other cities with Emergency Managers have seen the privatization of public schools, parks, and utilities. The takeover has now shifted into a form what can only be understood as genocidal: the shutting off of water to its own citizens, as is currently happening in Detroit. [Emphasis added.]

But “emergency managers” are not the only way to take water from people or charge them fortunes they can’t pay.

In Georgia, the technique is somewhat more subtle. There, water providers do not jack up the rates since doing so would cause a public outcry and protest. Instead, they send out water bills that are fictitious and that have no basis in actual water usage – bills as high or higher than 10 times more than the normal rate, often reaching the amount of three to six thousand dollars. When customers call to complain, the water board’s phone system conveniently doesn’t work and they end up reaching no one. And when they call the office of the CEO of the county, as people have been doing at the rate of nearly 50 calls per day for months, nothing happens. Letters of complaint go unanswered.

For those who may not fully understand the nature of the “DeKalb County Water Scam,” I encourage you to read my past article [“Is DeKalb County Georgia Government Running An Immense Financial Scam?”](#)

In my article, I presented a sample of a number of complaints that typify the types of comments found regarding the water rates in DeKalb County. In the time since that article, the complaints have continued to roll in as can be seen from reading the [reviews of DeKalb County Water and Sewer](#).

A sample of these reviews are as follows:

[Trudy R.](#)

28 days ago

I live alone in the last few months my bill has been between \$200-400 for a single household, I have paid someone to check to see if there’s a leak unseen, no leak – I’m waiting & hoping the county will see their errors, correct it & refund based on their mistakes

[Clarice B.](#)

2 months ago

My water bill has doubled since my last bill. I know it is incorrect because I had to shut off the water from the outside because I was having work done inside my house. I also turn off my water valve in my bath room when I am not home. I think they are just guestimating the meter reading and not actually coming out to read. Right now I would give DeKalb County Water & Sewer a grade of F

[Rosa S.](#)

8 months ago

Horrible Customer Service! After two billings of astronomical water bills I contacted DeKalb County Water & Sewer to come out and check my meter for a leaks. We corrected the problem and then went to the office to request an adjustment on our bill. We followed all the steps. I’ve made several attempts for the last 2 weeks to contact them to no avail. since their ENHANCED

AUTOMATED TELEPHONE SYSTEM just takes you through the horse and pony show to tell you that all the agents are busy and to try your call at a later time. Really!? It doesn't matter the time of day you call.... it's always the same. I have resorted to emailing. As a residence of Dekalb County. I am very disappointed with the services rendered while you are emptying my purse!

[Bill Tyor](#)

over a year ago

No number to call in outage – We have a water outage in our neighborhood and there is no number to call, as far as I know, to report it.

[Terry R](#) over a year ago

BILLING Is Just Incompetent with NO Follow through !! – I have had no less than 5 incorrect water bills from the utility. Some were in over \$700.00 in a billing cycle.

Each occurrence they have read the meter and agreed it was an incorrect reading.

would you not think that the meter reader who was incompetent causing this many problems would be terminated and or reassigned.

My last months bill indicated over 9,000 gallons. Single

household. Low flow toilets. They agreed to check the readings and call me back.

The next thing I will get is a termination notice.

What else can I do raise this valid concern for over a year.

In the case of Reverend Pinkney, are the Powers That Be coming down so hard on him because of what he might uncover and not just because of his protesting? Such was the case for Kevin Annett who was forced out of the United Church in [Canada](#) when he started looking into deaths in Catholic and Anglican residential schools for children of First Nation people. He uncovered genocide and was punished for his discoveries. He has since uncovered that many of the same things and worse are still going on there. [This video explains “worse.”](#)

So what is Pinkney exposing to deserve this treatment?

A mere [search engine term](#) of “water bills double” brings up a myriad of results from all across the country regarding the doubling of water bills in places as far apart as [St. Louis](#), [Morrison, OK](#), [St. Bernard Parrish, LA](#), [Washington, D.C.](#), [Maryland](#), [Chicago](#), and [many other cities and states](#).

A quick [search of the terms](#) “astronomical water bills” likewise reveals that many parts of the country do not need their water bills to double officially in order for them to be outrageously expensive. In fact, the reports surrounding many of the skyrocketing water bills in many of the cities such as Seattle and [Chesterfield, VA](#) are oddly familiar to the reports surrounding the mysteriously skyrocketing water bills in Dekalb County.

For instance, [as Kelly Avellino writes for NBC12](#),

Angry Chesterfield homeowners are calling NBC12, after getting astronomical water bills.

Ed Brooks, a resident in the River Downs neighborhood, says the water bill for his home is typically about a hundred dollars a month. However, his bill this month was more than \$1,100.

"I got a bad case of sticker shock when I opened it up and saw it was \$1,100," said Brooks.

Brooks is just one of a slew of neighbors in Chesterfield reporting skyrocketing water bills, right now. The River Downs neighborhood Facebook page shows one neighbor posting after another about historically high water bills.

"It is baffling," said Anne Farrell, also of River Downs.

Farrell's bill for August went up more than \$170 dollars from the same time, the previous year. The bill shows that Farrell's water usage allegedly doubled.

"I know we didn't do anything differently. I know we didn't have a leak. I know we didn't have any circumstances that the bill would go up that much," said Farrell.

Lauren Nelson, another resident, says her family cut back on water usage, nixing backyard water slides and only turning on the sprinklers periodically.

"Our bill last year was \$123. This year... over \$310," said Nelson.

Yet, while the American people are being charged grossly high and even invented amounts for water, in California and across the country, Nestle and Arrowhead are using massive amounts water, virtually for free.

As [Katie Rucke reports for Mint Press News](#),

As Californians struggle with the extreme drought gripping the entire state and work to preserve the precious resource by implementing bans and restrictions regarding its use, a major food supplier has been taking water from a particularly parched part of the state and bottling it.

Since 2002, [Nestle has had a deal with the Morongo Band of Mission Indians](#) that allows the food giant to pump water from the Millard Canyon aquifer located on the tribe's reservation, bottle it and sell it under the company's Arrowhead and Pure Life water brands.

How much Nestle, the country's largest bottled water company, paid the Morongo tribe for the rights to the water supply is not known, as the contract between the bottled water supplier and the tribe is not required to be disclosed.

The state has enacted [severe restrictions regarding water use](#), aiming to conserve enough water for about 3.5 million people, or about 9 percent of the state's population, but because the water plant is located on the Morongo Band

of Mission Indians' reservation, local water agencies do not have any control over the water plant.

Nestle also doesn't have to report how much water it takes from the water basin because of the plant's location on the reservation. Many say this is a point of concern, especially since water is a limited resource in the state.

[Ian James of The Desert Sun also reported](#) on Nestle's use of much-needed water supplies. He wrote,

The plant, located on the Morongo Band of Mission Indians' reservation, has been drawing water from wells alongside a spring in Millard Canyon for more than a decade. But as California's drought deepens, some people in the area question how much water the plant is bottling and whether it's right to sell water for profit in a desert region where springs are rare and underground aquifers have been declining.

"Why is it possible to take water from a drought area, bottle it and sell it?" asked Linda Ivey, a Palm Desert real estate appraiser who said she wonders about the plant's use of water every time she drives past it on Interstate 10.

"It's hard to know how much is being taken," Ivey said. "We've got to protect what little water supply we have."

Over the years, the Morongo tribe has clashed with one local water district over the bottling operation, and has tried to fend off a long-running attempt by state officials to revoke a license for a portion of the water rights. Those disputes, however, don't seem to have put a dent in an operation that brings the Morongo undisclosed amounts of income through an agreement with the largest bottled water company in the United States.

The plant is operated by Nestle Waters North America Inc., which leases the property from the tribe and uses it to package Arrowhead spring water as well as purified water sold under the brand Nestle Pure Life.

The Desert Sun has repeatedly asked the company for a tour of the bottling plant since last year, but those requests have not been granted. The company and the Morongo tribe also did not respond to requests for information about the amounts of water bottled each year.

Until 2009, Nestle Waters submitted annual reports to a group of local water districts showing how much groundwater was being extracted from the spring in Millard Canyon. Reports compiled by the San Geronio Pass Water Agency show that the amounts drawn from two wells in the canyon varied from a high of 1,366 acre-feet in 2002 to a low of 595 acre-feet in 2005. In 2009, Nestle Waters reported 757 acre-feet pumped from the wells during the previous year.

Even in Canada, Nestle is allowed to absorb the bulk of water resources in some locales for commercial purposes why the people who depend on those resources for drinking water are given the shaft. For instance, [Wellington Water Watchers](#), an organization that was opposed

to Nestlé's unfettered access to local drinking water supplies reported,

Despite no data on how drought or climate change will affect Guelph's water supply in years to come, Nestlé Waters of Aberfoyle has filed for an unprecedented 10-year provincial permit to take up to 3.6 million litres of water per day from the Grand River watershed.

[...]

"In our Grand River watershed, we are much more dependent on groundwater for our source of drinking water than most other places in Ontario, maybe most other places in Canada, with the exception of Prince Edward Island," Hueniken points out.

Guelph is 85 to 90 percent dependent on groundwater as the source of drinking water, Hueniken says, making this a local issue that is unique in Canada. "We could build a pipeline to the Great Lakes, but the quality of the water from a deep aquifer like ours, the Amabel, is so much better than surface water from the Great Lakes, that it just seems a shame to let Nestlé take this pure natural resource, bottle it and ship it outside of the watershed day after day."

Stopping this life-threatening crime is going to take a huge public exposure campaign. It will take more than a few lone voices crying in the wilderness.

The Irish are not only waking up. They are [protesting and refusing to pay](#). They see water as a human right.

In the absence of widespread awareness about the issue here in the United States, however, it might help to revisit the Enron scams in order to understand and jog the memories of the American people so that they can understand what may be happening here. Remember, Enron, while involved in many different scams, was also involved in the creation of a false shortage of electric power and subsequently raised rates under the pretense of stopping "brown outs" that Enron itself created. The results were that many victims ended up committing suicide, often because their businesses were destroyed as a result of the scams.

Water is also an actual physical entity, so the technique used to bilk people around it might be more difficult but it is certainly possible to do it.

In the US, the "Power Over Water" folks seemed to have taken a page from Enron in two ways. First, create the impression of a water crisis and then invent, invent, invent. It's more sly than what happened with [Bechtel in Bolivia](#) where it was a mathematically visible issue of "rates" and Bechtel's statements did not match up with either the truth or its other statements.

But in the US, people are being charged a fortune for water without changing the rates. The bills are total inventions. They are complete scams.

And where is the data on who and how many people are being skunked? It's reading this article. You are that information! You are the evidence. And all the information you can gather is evidence needed to stop these criminals.

The reality is people are trapped in an enormous [criminal scam by their own governments](#).

Bills can be 10 or 20 times higher than normal. The water board simply doesn't answer the phone, but the bills keep coming and then the water is cut off. Those controlling water have set up a system in which there is no public notice of rate changes, there is no relation between water usage and charges, and for each isolated individual with no knowledge of how many people who are being affected or any way to reach others in the same boat, there is no recourse.

It's Enron again – faked crisis followed by fake bills – only now more stealthily done than things were done in Bolivia, but still around a life or death resource: water.

People in every state need to investigate the water charges in their area. To be clear – they need to investigate the charges, not the rates which are posted. The bills people are receiving may have no correlation to the water they are using.

Smart meters can offer a means to make it appear that a certain amount of water was used even though it was not. Remember, Skilling's darling and the bankers' darling – digital information, can be easily rigged.

Americans are not supposed to know that drastically inflated water bills are being charged everywhere. Without that knowledge, they are alone in the scam. With it, they can see the whole country is being ripped off. Isolating people with their own crushing water bill – publicized rates unchanged – is just more case of slipping something past the “stupid Americans.” The reality, however, is that we are being lied to.

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