

Wells selectmen set public hearing on water moratorium proposal

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By Jim Kanak

WELLS, MAINE — Selectmen will hold a public hearing on Tuesday to determine whether a citizen group's proposal for a 180-day moratorium on water extraction in town by large corporations should be placed on the November ballot.

Wells resident Carol Simpson, of the Save Our Water group that vocally opposed the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport and Wells Water District's plan allow Poland Spring to extract water from the Branch Brook Aquifer in the Blueberry Plains area, urged residents to attend the hearing on Tuesday, Aug. 19, at 7 p.m. in the Wells Town Hall.

"Wells does not have a water extraction ordinance of any kind," Simpson said. "We're asking people to come out and show their support. The reason we're going for a moratorium is because the well heads (Poland Spring owner) Nestle and KKWWD were discussing are in Wells."

The water district's trustees voted last month to indefinitely table a proposed 30-year contract that would allow Nestle to extract water from the aquifer. District Superintendent Norm Labbe last week said the "contract is dead."

Wells Selectman Jim Spiller said he saw no need for a moratorium. "The DEP is required to approve any water extraction of that kind," Spiller said. "It's (approval) process would ensure that an extraction would have no impact on abutters. What else is needed?"

After the hearing, selectmen will vote to determine whether the moratorium proposal will be placed on the ballot for voters to weigh in on. Simpson said that's the correct thing to do to allow a proper ordinance to be crafted.

"That will allow the town to decide if or what type of water extraction ordinance we wish to enact," she said