

CONCERNED CITIZENS COALITION OF STOCKTON

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Letter to Akron Residents from Stockton:

On March 1, 2008, Stockton, California, residents regained public control of their drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater utility after 5 years of legal challenges.

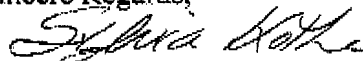
In February 2003, the City of Stockton signed a 20 year contract with OMI-Thames Water, Intl., to operate and maintain Stockton's water utility. This was a rushed decision by the Stockton City Council, calculated to beat a citizens' initiative on the ballot two weeks later – a measure that would let the public vote on decisions to contract out, or privatize, any portion of the water utilities

Our initiative passed by a 60% margin, but it was not retroactive; therefore, we had to file a lawsuit to ultimately reclaim the public's right to water. We won all the court decisions based upon the City's neglect to do an environmental impact report, but it was a 5 year battle that ultimately cost the city millions of dollars in legal fees – fees the local taxpayers must absorb.

It should be mentioned that almost all of the infrastructure for our city's and other US cities' water works have been paid for and are owned by the public. It is only fair that they should have a say on their tax investment and particularly for a resource as vital to all food and life forms as is water. For a city council to thwart a public vote is a sad commentary on its leadership.

Citizens' Save Our Sewer and Water Coalition is doing the public a great service in circulating an initiative to allow for a public vote. We in Stockton send our best wishes and our admiration for your actions in the public interest.

Sincere Regards,



Sylvia Kothe, Chair

Concerned Citizens Coalition of Stockton

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