

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy
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Meek Mills

Are you already missing election season? Are you worried you'll run out of things to argue about over Thanksgiving dinner? Well if you live in Louisiana, fret not! The Pelican State heads back to the ballot on Dec. 10 to decide whether Foster Campbell or John Kennedy will be the [last immortal](#) next U.S. Senator from Louisiana. And in Orleans Parish, a measure to renew funding for vital drainage infrastructure is flying [under the radar](#), but the result of the vote could have a major impact on the future of the crescent city.

Currently, Orleans property owners pay a tax of 4.66 mills (0.466% of a property's assessed value) to help fund the drainage system that pumps storm water out of ['the bowl'](#) during rains. A yes vote on the upcoming ballot would reduce the millage slightly to 4.46 and extend the tax for another 30 years. That equates to about \$10 per month for a home valued at \$350,000. If renewed, the millage would provide about \$15 million annually, roughly a third of the total drainage budget. Without that funding, the Sewerage and Water Board would be forced to tap its reserves to operate and maintain the system. If that's the case, according to a [report](#) from the Bureau of Government Research, reserves would run out by 2020, leaving an absolutely critical component of the city's infrastructure underfunded.

A King Goes to Court

Britain's high court will begin hearing arguments today in cases brought on behalf of more than 40,000 Nigerians against Royal Dutch Shell, one of the world's largest oil producers. The claims center around Shell's decades of oil exploration and production in the Niger Delta where it is estimated that [over 7,000 spills](#) occurred between 1970 and 2000. Those spills have contaminated the region's drinking water with known carcinogens like benzene and other compounds that are hazardous to human health. The claimants want the company to implement the recommendations in a [2011 U.N. Environmental Programme report](#) that called for wide-ranging restoration measure to be undertaken by the oil giant.

King Emere Godwin Bebe Okpabi flew to London for the hearings to speak on behalf of his people, the Ogale. Holding up water bottles full of contaminated drinking water from his land, [he implored the court, and the company's shareholders](#) to act. "Let the shareholders of Shell who are residents of the

The **Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy** is a program of the Tulane University Law School.

The Institute is dedicated to fostering a greater appreciation and understanding of the vital role that water plays in our society and of the importance of the legal and policy framework that shapes the uses and stewardship of water.

Coming up:

[Urban Water Series: Technical Master Class](#)
New Orleans, LA
December 8-9, 2016

[RAE/The Coastal Society Summit on Coastal and Estuarine Restoration](#)
New Orleans, LA
December 10-15, 2016

Water jobs:

[Attorney, Water Enforcement Division](#)
US EPA
Washington, D.C.

[Anthony A. Lapham River Conservation Fellow](#)
American Rivers
Washington, D.C.

[Climate Change Post-Doc Research Fellow](#)
Columbia University
New York, NY

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advanced world, like Britain, let them see a representative of a kingdom that is being destroyed for them to have money," he said before the hearing. "That's blood money."

Shell contends that Britain is an improper jurisdiction for the lawsuit, because the acts giving rise to the contamination were undertaken by SPDC, a Nigerian subsidiary of Shell. But King Okpabi has [little faith](#) in his home country's ability to mete out justice against a company that has been the [major economic actor](#) in the country for half a century: "Shell is Nigeria and Nigeria is Shell. You can never, never defeat Shell in a Nigerian court. The truth is that the Nigerian legal system is corrupt," he said.

Fight for Water 6

There's an oft-quoted adage, attributed ([perhaps incorrectly](#)) to Mark Twain: "Whiskey is for drinking, water is for fighting over." Folks in California's Central Valley know all too well the [potential for water to ignite tension](#). In a region that produces nearly \$50 billion in crops annually, the people are intimately tied to the land, and the land depends on a water supply that has been [lacking](#) throughout California's historic drought. This creates [severe hardship](#) for farm laborers who are watching their jobs and their drinking supply dry up. [Fight for Water](#), in its sixth iteration, aims to draw attention to this plight with a promising night of championship boxing.

The two boxers headlining the card at Fresno's SaveMart Center on Dec. 2nd are native sons of the Central Valley. Jose Ramirez (18-0, 13 KOs) hails from Avenal, CA, in Kings County. Ramirez is a former Olympian who trains with the legendary [Freddie Roach](#). He swings his [left hook like a sledgehammer](#) and is touted as a potential future world champion. The other spot on the marquee belongs to Daniel Valdivia was born in Zacatecas but grew up in the [Tulare dust](#), an hour east of Avenal. Also undefeated (12-0, 9 KOs), Valdivia is nicknamed "[El Chapulin](#)" (the Grasshopper) for the way he bounces around the ring. He has a [lightning-quick uppercut](#) that makes his opponents look like Pez-dispensers.

In announcing the event, both men highlighted the importance of water to their home. [For Ramirez](#) "There is no place like home for me to fight, this one is special for so many reasons but none more important than to bring awareness to serious issues going on right now." [Valdivia stated](#) that "[b]oxing is a platform that helps us put the Central Valley on the map and bring awareness of the Fight for Water and a powerful message on the positive contributions immigrants make in our society and the continued importance of water issues in California."

Maybe, given this moment of resurgent [Jacksonian democracy](#), sanctioned fisticuffs, rather than some boring old [compact](#), is the answer for [the ongoing Apalachicola-Chatahoochee-Flint court battle](#), too!

It's [Too Darn Hot](#) (And Acidic)

There are a few things you just don't do. You don't [tug on superman's cape](#). You don't go [writing hot checks](#) down in Mississippi. And you don't go off-trail to explore areas of high geothermal energy in Yellowstone if you don't know what you're doing. Heeding that last piece of advice could have saved the life of a 23-year old man who fell to his death last summer, according to new details that have emerged in the case.

The man and his sister were apparently [looking for a place to soak](#), or "hot pot," in one of the parks caldera-fed pools. Ignoring warning signs, they left a pedestrian boardwalk and went 200 yards out into the basin. As he was bending over to check the water temperature, he slipped into the 212-degree Fahrenheit water. He died from the combination of extreme heat and acidity. While rangers spotted the body the day he fell in, they were unable to recover it. When they returned the next day it had completely dissolved.