

TUWaterWays

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

[December 6, 2019](#)

Michigan Court Rules Against Nestlé in Decision That Could Delay Our *Idiocracy* Dystopia Just A Little Longer.

Plastic bottles of water [marked up 600%](#) might be the stuff people crave, but a Michigan court of appeals has ruled that it is [not an essential public service](#), overruling a previous decision. Nestlé claimed that its water bottling plant provided an essential public service, but a local township fought that plan by pointing out that it didn't conform to zoning laws. If the bottled water were an essential public service, the zoning violation could be overridden. If the ruling stands (so unless Nestlé appeals to the state supreme court and gets a second reversal), there is a potential added benefit of state environmental protection agencies feeling emboldened to stop or, more realistically, slow Nestlé's attempts at [privatizing water sources across the country](#). Until then, we can just continue to fight for [support of and investment in public water utilities](#) and clean water access [for all](#). When it comes to the claimed necessity of corporate privatization of public waters, like Public Enemy said, [don't believe the hype](#).

If You Were the Main Water Source for 300 Million People, You'd Be Stressed, Too!

The Nile River! As any kid who pays attention in geography class can tell you, it's the longest river in the world! It's a river so important that it warrants a [song](#) by both Beyoncé & Kendrick Lamar! It runs from the wet, beautiful, internationally politically fractious south to the dry, beautiful, internally politically fractious north and is vital to agriculture, industry, energy, and basic survival all along the way. So, changes to the river have reverberating consequences.

One big change underway is the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Blue Nile in, you guessed it, Ethiopia. The most prominent concerns these days come from Egypt, where the stream provides 90% of the country's fresh water – not just potable water, all fresh water. Now, dams don't reduce the amount of water in the river ([well...](#)), so what's the big deal, Egypt? (Who, by the way, has their own [mega dam](#) on the Nile already). The big deal is [the timetable for filling the reservoir](#). Once you build that big ol' dam, it take time for the reservoir to fill in behind it (flooding whatever habitats and cultural artifacts were left behind when the people were told to [get out of the "dam" way](#)). Egypt [fears](#) that filling the reservoir too quickly will result in too much of a reduction in the water needed to support the country's agriculture and, as a result, potentially riotous millions of people left without enough employment and food. These fears are clashing with Ethiopia's resolve to proceed with Ethiopia's business which have led to saber-rattling on all sides. (We all just keep sabers around for rattling purposes these days, right?)

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:

[Coastal Science Assistantship Program Application Deadline](#); December 6

[Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program Application Deadline](#); December 11

[CRCL T-Shirt Art Contest Deadline](#); December 11

CRCL Urban Swamp Habitat Planting Events
December [11](#) & [12](#); Violet, LA

[Teaching Environmental Justice through Transactional Law Webinar](#); December 12

[LA Watershed Initiative Grant Program: Phase II Application Deadline](#); December 13

[Latoya Ruby Frazier: Flint is Family Exhibit](#)
Now – December 14; New Orleans, LA

[Audubon Nature Institute Career Fair](#)
December 16; New Orleans, LA

[CPRA Board Meeting](#) and [NFIP & Coastal Insurability Subcommittee of the CPRA Board Meeting](#)
December 18; Baton Rouge, LA

[Oyster Shell Bagging](#)
December 19; Buras, LA

Water jobs:

[Attorney](#); Water Resources Ctrl. Bd; Sacramento, CA

[Intern](#); Global Water 2020; Washington, DC

[Assistant Professor- Environmental Science & Policy](#)
University of California-Davis; Davis, CA

[Postdoctoral Fellowship](#); The Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia; New York, NY

[Operations and Land Management Assistant Bureau Chief](#); Southwest Florida Water Management District; Brooksville, FL

Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy

6325 Freret Street, 1st Floor
New Orleans, LA 70118
504-865-5982

tulanewater.org

TWITTER: [@TulaneWaterLaw](#)

Well, that and [Olympic fencing](#).) That saber-rattling is being off-set by second round of external mediation that has begun this week.

All this “dam” stress around the Nile is taking place at the same time as climate and development stresses that make for difficult long-term forecasts for the region. For instance, a [study](#) out of Dartmouth predicts that there will be more precipitation falling in the southern Nile basin (that’s good!), but it will fall in a less regular manner (that’s bad!), and not lead to an increase in agricultural productivity to keep up with population growth in the region ([sorry, yogurt fans](#)).

Meanwhile, social science researchers are [watching the wider region](#) for the ways these stresses and uncertainties play out in the form of armed conflicts from looting all the way up to international war. Geomorphologists, on the other hand, are trying to figure out [just how old the Nile is](#) – 5 million years or 30 million years old – and whether or not it is linked to a hotspot in the Earth’s mantle. Unless there’s a way to link that research into harnessing geothermal energy, it’s hard to imagine answers to this very interesting question quieting the sabers any time soon.

How About A New Playlist?

In addition to being known as genial bon vivants who are welcome additions to parties from Timbuktu to Kalamazoo, we here at Chateau d’Eau are known for our world famous water-themed playlists. [You can find them all on our website](#). At the request of recent additions to our readership who bemoan the missed opportunities to contribute to previous playlists, it feels like a good time to start working on another list. This year, so much attention has been focused on various forms of water pollution – from plastics to PFAS, so let’s end 2019 with a big, concerted, group effort to come up with a playlist of **songs about pollution**. Email your additions to the list to Chris Dalbom at cdalbom@tulane.edu and stay tuned for the unveiling of the list a little ways on down the road. Thanks!