

March 2, 2017

Mr. Fernando Pimentel
Governor
Minas Gerais State, Brazil



Dear Mr. Fernando Pimentel,

In 2014 I had the opportunity of visiting the City of Cambuquira and to see some of the wonderful region of Circuito das Aguas. As far as I could see, it is a unique region in the world, with so many different mineral water sources. In my visit to Cambuquira I had the honour to award this city the “Blue Community” certificate, Cambuquira thus joining 18 Blue Communities in Canada, the cities of Saint Gallen and Bern in Switzerland and the City of Paris. I am glad to see such a small community as Cambuquira so engaged in defending water as a human right and a public good under public control. It is an example to other communities in the world. It is also the rare combination of a unique place for mineral water sources and passionate group of local citizens committed to protecting it. I felt inspired by their efforts and their enthusiasm.

Through this group of citizens, I was informed that the state company that owns the water parks - CODEMIG - has announced the opening of a public offer for a Public Private Partnership so that a private company could then exploit, bottle and sell the mineral waters from the water parks. I am deeply disappointed to see that such a unique water heritage can only be seen as a commodity to be bottled and sold.

Cambuquira and the other cities of Circuito das Aguas with its unique water parks deserve a better future, a blue future. I ask you to reconsider the decision of this P3 and instead to give full support to a regional sustainable development project that could become an example to the world. I have been informed that the Federal University of Lavras and the University of Bern in Switzerland - both also “blue universities” - are willing and already engaged in such a proposal for the region in cooperation with the engaged citizens of Cambuquira. From my side, I would like to support within my reach all efforts for a broader international cooperation around Cambuquira and the Circuito das Aguas region.

Dear Governor, the planet's water resources are in terrible distress with the UN reporting that within one short decade or so, demand for water will outstrip supply by 40%. We must move now to protect the precious waters of our communities as a public trust and human right and we need you to defend the waters of your region. Future generations will thank you.

I thank you for your attention and remain,

Maude Barlow
National Chairperson, Council of Canadians,
Former Senior Advisor to the UN General Assembly