

## Water bottlers blamed for dry wells

by UPI

BLUE RIDGE, Ga. - Residents of a North Georgia county blame companies that bottle and sell local spring water for their wells running dry. "It just tears me up to see all these trucks hauling water out of our county," Brad Bradbury, who lives at the edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Fannin County, told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Bradbury and his wife, Lucy, had to dig a new well last year. Other area residents have also had springs and wells run dry, and about two-thirds of Fannin County residents and business owners rely on well and spring water. The area has been in a prolonged drought, but bottlers pay nothing for the water they draw from the area's springs. The bottlers do not need take enough water to require permits and no one knows for sure how much they siphon off. In Georgia and a number of other states, bottled water companies are under increasing pressure from worried homeowners and environmentalists. Michigan has lowered the limit for drawing water without a permit.

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