Osceola Township, U.S. Feb 4 (Agencies) Global food conglomerate Nestlé is in a battle with critics in tiny Osceola Township, Michigan where residents complain the Swiss company’s water extraction operation is draining the environment. Mayor Walter Bibbs, retired teacher widowed by a stroke, has lived in nearby Evart for 50 years. Bibbs told the Associated Press that Nestlé’s “draining operation” is strangling the town’s drinking water. “We’re running a groundwater table. It’s like the state of Kansas running water,” he said.

Local officials and hundreds of residents are pressing Nestlé to stop pumping water from the underground aquifer. The town is appealing a county permit that allows the company to pump more water than it has been doing for years—about 50 million gallons (190 million liters) a day. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality approved the project on Nov. 9.

“We have no water to really conserve these levels,” he added. “The water lake tables are lower today than what they were two years ago.”

Nestlé also rejects this argument and also has some backing from some experts who praise the company for keeping water rates low.

Aquifers

“There’s been no measurable change in the strata,” said Mike Furtado, a consultant to the company and a former state environmental agency commissioner. “I think it’s been well-managed to affect those strata.”

The state Environmental Protection Agency in Michigan has approved Nestlé’s proposal to pump 400 gallons of water a minute, after a hearing. Some residents have raised concerns about such large-scale pumping operations, saying it will deplete the aquifer at a faster rate.

“Nestlé is pumping more from the underground aquifer than any other company in the state,” said Terry McFarland, a former member of the EPE’s groundwater advisory board. “There are a lot of questions about what Nestlé is doing.”

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Osceola Township, which sits on the banks of Chippewa Creek, is one of the most important sources of water in Michigan. The local water district is responsible for providing drinking water to more than 80,000 people.

The water district, which serves Osceola and neighboring counties, has been pumping water for Nestlé since the early 2000s for its “Ice Mountain” brand of bottled water. The company wanted to pump more water to support its bottling operations.

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An article from a controversial Osceola Township, Michigan where residents complain the Swiss company’s water extraction operation is strangling the town’s drinking water. The local officials and hundreds of residents are pressing Nestlé to stop pumping water from the underground aquifer.

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A woman takes a photo inside the tomb of an Old Kingdom priestess adorned with well-preserved and rare wall paintings on the Giza plateaus in Cairo that was unveiled on Feb. 3. Local media reported it was discovered after being discovered during excavation work in Giza’s western cemetery by a team of Egyptian archeologists. Antiquities Minister Khaled al-Anany showed on Feb. 3 that the tomb belongs to Hatshepsut, the goddess of fertility who assisted women in childbirth.

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