

Small Desert Water District in Faceoff with Corporation

By [Jason Sloss](#), News Channel 3 Anchor

POSTED: 5:46 pm PDT June 16, 2010

UPDATED: 5:51 pm PDT June 16, 2010

CABAZON -- The Cabazon Water District has supplied the nearby Arrowhead bottling plant with its industrial water for the last nine years.

District officials say, during that time, there has never been a service agreement. They say one is needed now.

"We need to have some sort of an agreement that will protect our people here in Cabazon and protect the aquifer. That's what it's all about. Sometimes you gotta do what you gotta do," said R.D. Cash, the water district's board president.

Officials say the Arrowhead plant has been using 2.4 million gallons of water each month. The district says it can handle the amount, but wanted an agreement to put a cap on usage, while asking the company to pay a fair share for maintenance and improvements.

"Most important, if that ever became a burden to the water supply then we would reserve the right to interrupt their service without notice and the community would always come first," said general manager Calvin Louie.

The district says negotiations hit a dead end. Wednesday morning, it turned off the spigot. In turn, officials at Nestle Waters North America, which owns the Arrowhead brand, say the plant's utility water source will now come from the Morongo Indian tribe.

The plant's spring water sources are also owned by the tribe.

"This doesn't change our business at all. The water we get essentially comes from the same area," said Larry Lawrence, a resource manager for Nestle Waters. "So there should be no change in service to our business or anybody else in the valley there."

The water district says, without the plant, it's losing between 12 to 15-thousand dollars a month. "We enjoy the revenue too. Just means we gotta tighten our belt a little bit, but we've done that before," said Cash.

But both sides say they hope a deal will get done.

"We always have a good neighbor policy. The doors are never closed," said Louie.

*Copyright 2010 [KESQ](#). All rights reserved.
This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.*