

A Short Summary of CFE's Report Describing Sewage Treatment in the Galilee,
Northern Israel / March 2005
(The full report was written in Hebrew)

THE DESTRUCTION OF WATER RESOURCES IN ISRAEL

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Over the past 20 years the population in the Galilee has increased extensively. However, the impact of this important activity on water resources was never taken into consideration. The proximity of polluting sources to underground water reservoirs in the Galilee is of major concern due to the fact that the Galilee is Israel's major water supplier.

In 2001 and again in 2002, water supplies from the Kabri water springs were disrupted due to pollution from diesel oils and heavy metals. Then again, the Ein Ziv spring in the Western Galilee was recently shut down due to nitrate pollution. Many other major water resources throughout the country have been forced to close due to serious pollution or excessive salinity.

As a result of financial disarray of the local municipal authorities, the sewage infrastructures throughout the Galilee are in a state of collapse. The problem is further exacerbated by the fact that increased sewage generation now flows directly into underground water resources.

Although similar problems as above exist throughout Israel, this report concentrates on the Galilee in particular, as this is the data in hand.

The report presents clear information on the collapse of the sewage infrastructure in the Galilee and its negative impact on Israel's water resources as well as local nature reserves.

In the year 2001 the Israeli parliament passed the Water and Sewage Corporation Law. This enabled the government, as part of its privatization policy, to privatize the water and sewage infrastructures, which in reality were never owned by the State.

The writers of this report considered this approach to be inappropriate; they considered that privatization of the infrastructures, without suitable guidance of a central supervisory body, would only aggravate the situation.

The question is what will happen to water resources when the main consideration in operating sewage infrastructures is based purely on economic grounds.

Professor Dan Zaslavsky, former Governor of the State's Water Authority, claims that a central independent authority should be established to operate and manage all water and sewage infrastructure systems. This body, he argues, should include a department for water systems management, R&D and planning at State and regional level and it should supervise local water and sewage corporations. All supervision and its enforcement should be concentrated in the hands of this authority, thus halting the present fragmentation between the Ministries of Environment, Health, Housing, Interior and Infrastructure. He claims that such an authority is the necessary solution to solve the serious sewage treatment problems in Israel today.