

Chilean Government Pushes Bill to Nationalize Water Resources



Santiago de Chile, April 22 (PL-RHC) -- The Chilean government of Michelle Bachelet today is promoting a bill in Congress to nationalize water resources pointing out that it is a national asset for public use.

The proposal was presented during Bachelet's first term (2006-2010) as a constitutional change, but was shelved by her successor at La Moneda, Sebastián Piñera.

"It has to be clear in the Constitution that the water belongs to all Chileans, so we want an asset under public control," Alberto Undurraga, Minister of Public Works, told the newspaper 'La Tercera'.

In this regard , he stated that the state has an obligation to provide water to " identify priority uses."

After the inauguration of the new Congress , the head of the Constitutional Commission of the Chamber of Deputies, Ricardo Rincon, took the matter up for discussion again.

"There are certain issues that are very important for the country. We can advance the discussion, get feedback and perhaps anticipate conclusions ," said Rincon.

The move coincides with reports of water shortages in Chile , which led the Executive to prepare a report by

the presidential delegate of water resources, Reynaldo Ruiz de Valdés.

'La Tercera' notes that the current project goes deeper, because it not only considers water as a national asset for public use but also " allows putting an end to rights , that is to say expropriate or nationalize" .

Also, he added, it empowers the authorities to reserve water flows.

On Saturday, several social organizations will march through the capital in support of the nationalization of water resources.

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