

STARTS

No to Nestle

Author of the Breastfeeding (Scotland) Act 2005, Elaine Smith MSP has hit out at a decision by a number of local authorities to award the contract for water supplies to Nestle.

The overall contract, worth approximately £5 million annually, is part of a Framework Agreement for bottled water coolers/plumbed in water coolers which incorporates Nestle and three other water suppliers.

The Labour MSP said:

'Whilst there has been a powerful drive amongst some local authorities to focus on sourcing 'fairly traded' goods, the award of the Nestle water contract suggests that a spotlight must be shone on the unethical practices of companies, many of them multinationals, who participate in what I would term 'unfair trade'.

'Whilst the plight of poor mothers in Africa-often the target of Nestle's aggressive formula milk marketing- might not be as high profile as some of the more populist campaigns, they are undoubtedly of equal importance. I feel that I have a duty to flag up the wider implications of investing in companies with questionable marketing strategies and practices.'

There are currently five councils using Nestle as their suppliers. These are; North Lanarkshire Council, East Ayrshire Council, West Dunbartonshire Council, Renfrewshire Council and North Ayrshire Councils. The contract runs from December 2007 to November 2010/2011 with a one year extension if required.

Elaine said:

'I consider this decision by a number of local authorities to be, at the very least, misguided given Nestlé's previous involvement in a number of aggressive marketing campaigns to promote formula milk. I acknowledge that Councils have a duty to be prudent with public funds but I feel that greater consideration must be given to the ethical background of the companies they invest in.'

'Cost efficiency cannot be the sole driving force in decision making.'

'We must consider the broader issues here and I believe we have a duty to exercise our social conscience and ensure that the local authorities of Scotland are not investing in violators of the WHO International Codes who indiscriminately put profit before people.'

ENDS

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