



STOP MEGA-BASINS

**Next International Mobilization
July 16-21, 2024 - Poitou**

Despite the massive scale of the anti-basin protests, the French government is stubbornly pushing ahead with its plans. The emblematic battle for water as a common good and for peasant agriculture has yet to be won. This July, when the eyes of the world will be on the river parade of the Olympic Games in Paris, **we will have to join forces to win the most essential of matches: finding collective actions to ensure that water is finally protected in this country and everywhere else.** So we're once again calling on everyone to rally around the endangered marshlands also known as the green Venice of the Marais Poitevin, the depleted agricultural lands of the Poitou, but also its many marks and still-fertile lands. Get ready : when waterways come together to become a river, it can make watersheds.

Mega-basins in Trouble - Mega-basins are giant craters, sometimes up to 18 hectares in size, lined with plastic and filled with pumped groundwater. They are the latest headlong rush in an agro-industrial model that has been degrading and drying out our living environments for far too long. They are designed above all for crops requiring intensive irrigation, for the benefit of a small minority of farmers, and at the expense of virtuous forms of water storage and sharing that would benefit all farmers, the population and biodiversity.

Last summer, the scandalous 70% public funding of the basins was strongly criticised, even by the Cour des Comptes. The Court found that the government's bias in favour of this infrastructure was dangerously delaying the necessary changes in farming practices. Even within the institutions that are supposed to be in charge of protecting water quality and quantity, criticism is coming to light and doubts about the viability of the basins are spreading among irrigators.

The ongoing struggles are in the process of burying many of the water reservoirs initially designed. Over the last 3 years of campaigning, 4 already filled reservoirs have been retrospectively deemed illegal, 15 projects have been cancelled by the courts after being judged unsuitable in the light of climate change, 14 others have been rendered inoperable, and site gates are still falling down. Many basins have already been abandoned thanks to the pressure exerted by the local opposition.

Government Dictate - And yet they persist! The Minister of Agriculture recently dared to announce the objective of building 100 new mega-basins by the end of the year. On the outskirts of the Marais Poitevin, despite the legal appeals still pending against the 16 mega-basins, work is continuing painfully. Against a backdrop of conflicts of interest, two of them started in recent months at Prieaires and Epannes, while the one at Sainte-Soline has been stalled all winter.

Under the Loi d'Orientation Agricole, the government is seeking to have these infrastructures recognised as being of "major general interest", so as to short-circuit successful legal challenges and trample on environmental protections. His selective response to the agricultural malaise expressed this winter has been to favour - for the benefit of agribusiness bosses - the devices and sectors that are poisoning farmers, rather than guaranteeing them work and a decent income. It thus continues to pander to private interests rather than genuinely defending farmers and common goods. It funds the sterilisation of land rather than the development of agro-ecology, the only way to face up to the climate crisis. It is to this transition that public subsidies should now be allocated. However, it's the prefects who, driven by authoritarian pressure, are currently challenging court decisions and pushing forward with the mega-basin projects promised to big industries, cooperatives, and traders all over France.

Towards a Moratorium! - For the time being, therefore, we need to implement a popular moratorium on the ground, and gather to assert its necessity. **While the anti-basin movement is spreading to other parts of the country and beyond, this mobilisation represents a historic turning point: if we stop them here, we will stop them elsewhere!** If the 'basin system' - hybrid corn export chains, factory farming, monocultures gorged with inputs - fails to perpetuate the agro-industrial deadlock, we will finally be able to move together towards forms of agriculture that protect the land and water.

More than a year after the convergence at Sainte-Soline, this summer's massive gathering in the Poitou region is an opportunity for all the social and environmental forces to demonstrate to the government that it cannot hope to stop this vital momentum by repression. From July 16 to 21, amidst our diverse presence including farmers, union members, and residents of all ages from rural and urban areas, we'll be reinventing the ways in which we demonstrate and protect ourselves. We will find a thousand ways to show our rejection of hydraulic projects.

No Bassaran!

To join the signatories of the call:

<https://framaforms.org/19-20-juillet-2024-stop-mega-bassines-prochaine-mobilisation-internationale-1699517649>

// July 19-20 - Protests

The peak of this week of mobilization will be the two major days of river demonstrations and massive actions on July 19 and 20.

// July 16-21 - Village for Water and Land Defense

They will be preceded by an international village to debate, train, celebrate our struggles, and build the future. It will take place from July 16 to 21 with a multitude of round tables, workshops, training sessions, walks, concerts, and performances. Its program is detailed on the movement's websites, notably: <https://bassinesnonmerci.fr> and <https://lessoulevementsdelaterre.org>

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

// To receive updates and practical information, the locations of the village and meeting points for the protests on July 19 and 20, a simple way is **to subscribe to the Telegram channel of the anti-basin struggle** : <https://t.me/STOPmegabassines>

// To join the mobilization, join the **Water Convoys** - collectives opposed to megabasins organize motorized, cycling, or pedestrian convoys to travel to Poitou in July from the six hydrographic basins - from mainland France and beyond. **We call for joining them. More information here :**

<https://bassinesnonmerci.fr/index.php/2024/04/15/guide-pour-organiser-des-convois-de-leau->

// To organize informational events near you about the **"Stop Mega-Basins" mobilization in July**, write to : stopmegabassines2024@riseup.net

// Aquatic, Olympic, and transalpine twinning - **This mobilization is being built in connection with other summer mobilizations, notably in Venice in early September, to preserve water against artificial snow reservoir projects, demanded in the name of the 2026 Winter Olympics :**

<https://lessoulevementsdelaterre.org/en-eu/blog/du-2-au-8-septembre-2024--de-la-venise-verte-a-la->

// **More than 100 trade union, environmental, and peasant organizations are already calling for this mobilization**, find the complete list here :

<https://bassinesnonmerci.fr/index.php/2023/11/09/20-21-juillet-2024-stop-mega-bassines-prochaine-mobilisation-internationale/>

// To support the struggle : <https://www.helloasso.com/associations/association-pour-la-defense-des-terres/formulaires/4>