

'It's an issue that two months ago I'd have called an anecdote, and is fast becoming a trend.'

ROBERT CIOLEK, *water commission*

Worry flowing over new wells

By Peter S. Canellos
GLOBE STAFF

Roger Berkowitz, the Legal Seafoods impresario, jokes: "The quality of our water is so good that we were thinking of bottling it and calling it Allston Springs."

Berkowitz is talking about the extremely pure water his company is pumping out of the earth under Boston at a rate of 30 gallons per minute. Alarmed by Boston-area water rates that have soared by 445 percent over seven years as the state struggles to pay for the Boston Harbor cleanup, Legal Seafoods decided to dig its way out of the problem.

Now the 900-foot private well supplies water to wash fish and laundry at the restaurant chain's processing plant in Allston.

Berkowitz said he is thrilled with an investment that will pay for itself in two years and that is producing "much better" water than the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority.

Boston officials, who foresee a mass corporate exodus from the MWRA, are shuddering at the prospect of wells being dug throughout the city.

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Roger Berkowitz visits the pumping station for his Legal Seafoods operation's private well in Allston.