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Al Franco
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Cc: Ian James
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Dear Mr. Franco,

A March 5, 2015, article by *The Desert Sun*, "[Bottling water without scrutiny](#)," presents a misleading and inaccurate image of the bottled water industry in California. As the story points out, bottled water production uses only a fraction of one percent of the water used in California, yet the article attempts to tie bottled water to the state's ongoing drought.

The International Bottled Water Association (IBWA) rejects these misleading and inaccurate depictions of our industry's commitment to responsibly and effectively managing water resources.

The fact is that bottled water production is among the smallest and most efficient of all industry water users. It is curious that this article focuses on the water use oversight of bottled water but not on other, far more impactful water users — from golf courses to almond growers. The vigorous and lengthy effort by *The Desert Sun* article to try and create a cause-and-effect connection between bottled water and the California drought, while at the same time acknowledging no such connection exists, appears to be based on something other than fact-based journalism.

The bottled water industry complies with California's regulatory framework, which applies to other water users in the same class, and will continue to do so. While *The Desert Sun* article repeatedly infers that bottled water is acting out of compliance with state regulations, the exact opposite is true.

Another important fact is that most of the bottled water produced in California is consumed in California. In fact, for schools in Los Angeles and communities in the Central Valley that don't have access to drinkable water, bottled water is a vital everyday necessity.

Despite the bottled water industry's size, the amount of water used is relatively tiny. In fact, bottled water uses less than 0.004 percent of *all* water in the United States. While overall sales growth and consumption of bottled water has increased as consumers choose water instead of less healthy sugared beverages, bottled water still has the smallest water and energy footprint of any packaged beverage. The results of a [2014 IBWA benchmarking study](#) show that the amount of water and energy used to produce bottled water products in North America is less than all other types of packaged beverages.

On average, only 1.32 liters of water (including the liter of water consumed) and 0.24 mega joules of energy are used to produce one liter of finished bottled water. With bottled water having the lowest energy and water use of all packaged beverages, this healthy choice trend is actually reducing the overall beverage environmental footprint, equating to [6.4 billion gallons](#) of water saved each year.

To put it in context, the entire U.S. bottled water market is about 11 billion gallons; New York City goes through that amount of tap water in one week. Los Angeles goes through that amount of tap water in less than three weeks. According to the UCLA Institute for Environment and Sustainability, agriculture, at almost 80 percent, is the largest user of water in the state, followed by urban residential use at 13 percent.

Additionally, 100 percent of bottled water is intended for human consumption. Conversely, only about 2 percent of tap water is used for human consumption. A vast majority of water is instead used in agriculture, households, and for industrial applications.

The bottled water industry has a long and deeply-held tradition of effectively and responsibly protecting and managing our vital natural resources. Sustainable, protected, and naturally recharged water sources are the single most important aspect of our business. This commitment to environmental excellence holds true wherever bottled water facilities are located.

I respectfully request that your article be updated to reflect the facts mentioned above. As it currently appears, the story misinforms consumers about bottled water.

To learn more about bottled water please visit www.bottledwater.org. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

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