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AlterNet
101 Spear Street
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San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Mr. Hazen and Mr. Weathers,

I am writing with regard to your article "[The Most Brazen Rip-Off Ever? How the Beverage Industry Brainwashed You to Fear Tap Water](#)," published on AlterNet.com on March 13, 2015. It is unfortunate that you did not reach out to the International Bottled Water Association (IBWA), as we would have been able to provide you with the facts about bottled water. As published, the article contains numerous false and misleading claims about bottled water.

Consumers who choose to drink bottled water can rely on its consistent record of safety and quality. I respectfully request that you remove this inaccurate story from your website or update it to reflect the facts about bottled water.

Below are several examples of the story's significant inaccuracies and misleading statements:

AlterNet: Industry marketing attacks tap water

IBWA: The article points out a single nine year-old misguided ad by one small company. That single incident should not be used as an attempt to paint a whole industry. The bottled water industry is proud of the impact we have had and continue to have encouraging people to drink more water.

After years of increased soft drink consumption, American's growing preference for bottled water has helped people find a path back to water as a healthier beverage of choice. Today people are drinking much more water than soft drinks and both tap water and bottled water are growing.

The bottled water industry supports a strong public water system, which is important for providing citizens with clean and safe drinking water. In fact, many bottled water companies use public water sources for their purified bottled water products.

AlterNet: *Bottled water is unregulated... and EPA standards for tap water are stricter*

IBWA: It is a fundamental fact of law that bottled water is [comprehensively regulated](#) by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as a packaged food product. Tap water is regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). By federal law, FDA regulations governing the safety and quality of bottled water must be at least as stringent as the EPA standards for tap water. And, in some very important cases like lead, coliform bacteria, and *E. coli*, bottled water regulations are substantially more stringent than EPA standards for tap.

AlterNet: *Bottled water is the same as tap water*

IBWA: Purified bottled water, typically sourced from municipal water systems, is not just tap water in a bottle. Once this water enters the bottled water plant, several processes are employed to ensure that it meets the FDA purified water standard. These treatments may include one or more of the following: reverse osmosis, distillation, micro-filtration, carbon filtration, ozonation, and ultraviolet (UV) light. The finished water product is then placed in a bottle under sanitary conditions and sold to the consumer.

AlterNet: *Bottled water has micro-biological impurities and does not test for them*

IBWA: Tap water is tested for biological impurities in order to ensure that the chlorine and other chemicals used to kill harmful bacteria are at effective levels. Bottled water uses alternative disinfection processes employing technologies such as ultraviolet light and ozone to ensure it is free of bacteria, then the product is sealed in containers.

AlterNet: *Bottled water containers are unsafe because they contain Bisphenol A*

IBWA: Single-serve bottled water containers are packaged in PET plastic. PET plastic is approved as safe for food and beverage contact by the FDA and similar regulatory agencies throughout the world, and has been for over 30 years. PET plastic is used in a variety of packaging for many foods, including everything from peanut butter, soft drinks, and juices to beer, wine, and spirits.

BPA is not a chemical component of PET. The consensus among international regulatory agencies is that BPA is safe and regulatory agencies in several countries and the FDA have ruled favorably on the safety of BPA. You can learn more about BPA [here](#).

AlterNet: *Lack of transparency*

IBWA: All packaged foods and beverages, including bottled water, are subject to extensive FDA labeling requirements that provide consumers with a great deal of product quality information.

In addition, virtually all bottled water products include a telephone number or website on the label that consumers can use to contact the company to obtain information about the product. Moreover, any product label statements or advertisements that are found to be false or misleading may be subject to federal and state anti-fraud laws.

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Again, I respectfully request that your online article be removed or updated to reflect this accurate information. As it currently appears, the story misinforms consumers about the safety and quality of bottled water.

As Americans are making a greater effort to choose healthier foods and beverages, it is not in the best interest of your readers to discourage consumption of this safe, healthy, and convenient product. You can learn more about bottled water by visiting www.bottledwater.org.

Thank you for reading and giving these notes your attention. I also wanted to see if you are open to an in-person phone conversation about this important story? My direct line is 703-647-4609. If not, please let me know you've received this email.

Sincerely,

Chris Hogan
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