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Dear Mr. Blodget,

I'm writing in regard to Erin Brodwin's story "16 facts that show why bottled water is one of the biggest scams of the century" (<http://www.businessinsider.com/bottled-water-facts-science-healthy-2017-4>). Americans are making great efforts to live a better lifestyle by choosing healthier foods and beverages, and drinking water – tap, bottled, or filtered – should be encouraged. With the high rates of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease in our on-the-go society, bottled water provides a safe, healthy, convenient beverage choice. Discouraging people from choosing this healthy drink option is not in the public interest.

We're noting that many of the article's source links take readers to outdated, misleading, or biased information. As a result, there are numerous factual errors in this story and, per your policy of correcting errors, we are writing to let you know, so that you can make the following corrections:

- In the intro

**Article:** "For the vast majority of Americans, a glass from the tap and a glass from the bottle are virtually identical as far as their health and nutritional quality are concerned."

**Fact:** Federal law requires that Food and Drug Administration (FDA) bottled water regulations be as protective of the public health as Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards for tap water. And, in some case, such as lead, the FDA bottled water regulations are more stringent than the EPA tap water standards. In addition, researchers have estimated 19.5 million cases of acute gastrointestinal illness are caused by tap water each year. Read more: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18020305>. In contrast, a survey of state bottled water regulatory authorities, dated June, 2009 and conducted by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), found there were zero outbreaks of

foodborne illness from bottled water over a 5-year period.  
<http://www.bottledwater.org/public/CSA%20FINAL%20103015.pdf>

**Article:** “In some cases, publicly-sourced tap may actually be safer since it is usually tested more frequently.”

**Fact:** Water used to produce bottled water is tested before production, during production, and as finished product. If you look closely at “required testing,” bottled water, on a gallon for gallon basis, is tested 30 times more often than tap water. In addition, bottled water does not leave the plant until water tests are completed and passed, whereas when publicly-sourced tap water is found to exceed the legal limits for contaminants, the water supply continues to consumers, with applicable public notifications (e.g., health alerts, boil water alerts). Another important difference is that for certain substances, tap water can exceed the established maximum contaminant limit on one or more occasions as long as it meets a 12 month average for that contaminant. On the other hand, water in every single bottled water container must meet standards set out by the FDA and none of the results can be averaged. See more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gPgWVYvQ-es>

- On the Perrier slide

**Article:** “Americans continue to consume more packaged H<sub>2</sub>O than people in other countries do.”

**Fact:** The United States ranks #2 behind China. See Beverage Marketing Corporation data here: [https://issuu.com/ibwa/docs/bwr\\_jul-aug\\_2016\\_final/20](https://issuu.com/ibwa/docs/bwr_jul-aug_2016_final/20)  
And on a per capita basis, Americans rank #6, see: [https://issuu.com/ibwa/docs/bwr\\_jul-aug\\_2016\\_final/22](https://issuu.com/ibwa/docs/bwr_jul-aug_2016_final/22)

- On the waterfall slide

**Article:** “In fact, a recent report found that almost half of all bottled water is actually derived from the tap.”

**Fact:** Bottled water is not just tap water in a bottle. When a public water system is used as a source for making purified bottled water, several processes are employed to ensure that it meets comprehensive FDA regulations. These treatments can include ozonation, filtration, reverse osmosis, distillation, or deionization. The finished water product is then placed in a bottle under sanitary conditions and sold to the consumer, and the physical quality of this water is not the same water that comes out of the tap. See more: <https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/cfdocs/cfcfr/cfrsearch.cfm?cfrpart=129&showfr=1>

- On the reusable bottle slide

**Article:** “Tap water is also typically tested for quality and contamination more frequently than bottled water. The Environmental Protection Agency is responsible for conducting those tests.”

**Fact:** As stated above, water used to produce bottled water is tested before production, during production, and as finished product. If you look closely at “required testing,” bottled water, on a gallon for gallon basis, is tested 30 times more often than tap water. In addition, bottled water does not leave the plant until water tests are completed and passed, whereas when publicly-sourced tap water is found to exceed the legal limits for contaminants, the water supply continues to consumers, with applicable public notifications (e.g., health alerts, boil water alerts). Another important difference is that for certain substances, tap water can exceed the established maximum contaminant limit on one or more occasions as long as it meets a 12 month average for that contaminant. On the other hand, water in every single bottled water container must meet standards set out by the FDA and none of the results can be averaged. See more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gPgWVYvQ-es>

- On the oil drilling slide

**Article:** “A study in the journal Environmental Research Letters found that roughly 32-54 million barrels of oil went into producing the amount of bottled water consumed in the US in 2007.”

**Fact:** That statement demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of how plastic containers are made. Most commercial plastic materials in the United States are derived from oil by-products leftover from gasoline production. The sticky solids that remain from oil refining are literally recycled into pellets that are melted and formed into plastic materials. It is misleading to state or imply that virgin barrels of oil are dedicated to making plastic bottles. Bottled water containers are just one of thousands of food products packaged in PET plastic. In fact, of all the plastics produced in the United States, PET plastic bottled water packaging makes up only 0.92 percent—less than 1 percent. See more: <http://www.bottledwater.org/education/environmental-impact/environmental-footprint>

- On the soccer player slide

**Article:** “It also takes more water to make a bottle of water than it does to fill it. A recent study for the International Bottled Water Association found that North American companies use 1.39 liters of water to make one liter of the bottled stuff.”

**Fact:** The figure, from a report by the Antea Group, is actually 1.32 liters and *includes* the contents of water consumed. So, it takes 0.32 liters to make and package 1 liter of bottled water (without the contents). See more: [http://www.bottledwater.org/public/IBWA%20Water%20and%20Energy%20Use%20Benchmarking%20Report%20-%20Exec%20Summary%20Revis%20051815\\_0.pdf#overlay-context=reports-studies](http://www.bottledwater.org/public/IBWA%20Water%20and%20Energy%20Use%20Benchmarking%20Report%20-%20Exec%20Summary%20Revis%20051815_0.pdf#overlay-context=reports-studies). And bottled water has the lowest energy and water use of all packaged

beverages, which means the current healthy choice trend is actually reducing the overall beverage environmental footprint. When people choose bottled water over other packaged drinks, 6.4 billion gallons (*video*) of water are saved each year.

- On piles of empty bottles slide

**Article:** “For every six water bottles Americans use, only one makes it to the recycle bin, according to National Geographic.” \*\* Note dead link in source.

**Fact:** Bottled water containers are 100 percent recyclable and should always be placed in a recycle bin. The bottled water industry promotes and supports recycling efforts through partnerships with numerous recycling groups. In addition, many IBWA members have extensive volunteer programs, which involve employees helping with recycling and litter cleanup. These efforts include:

- Supplying recycle bins in Georgia and Florida
- Public school children recycling education in Ohio and California
- Outdoor recycling education (signage) in Indiana
- Community assistance for recycling (household recycling) in Illinois

And according to the National Association for PET Container Resources, bottled water containers are #1 in curbside recycling bins making up 53.1 percent of consumer packaging by count.

I’d also like to note that Ms. Brodwin’s research relied almost entirely on previously published reports, which were often old, misleading, or biased. It’s a shame she didn’t contact IBWA to get the industry’s point of view and to verify statements made in her article. I encourage her and other Business Insider writers to do so in the future.

Thank you for reading and giving my concerns your attention. I respectfully request that you update your online article to correct the errors aforementioned and to include our point of view on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Jill Culora  
Vice President of Communications  
International Bottled Water Association