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April 13, 2015

Ms. Alissa Scheller
Reporter
Huffington Post

Via email: alissa.scheller@huffingtonpost.com

cc: Katie Nelson
National Editor
katie.nelson@huffingtonpost.com

Brynn Mannino
Website Editor
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Dear Ms. Scheller,

As the vice president of communications for the International Bottled Water Association (IBWA), I wanted to reach out to you directly regarding your April 10, 2015, *Huffington Post Green* article, "[A Lot Of Bottled Water Comes From Drought-Stricken California.](#)" Because your article and its companion illustrations misinform consumers by presenting numerous inaccurate arguments, I respectfully request that the article and illustrations be removed or updated to ensure your readers receive factual information. Here's why.

I'm very familiar with the incorrect data you presented because similar claims were made in an August 11, 2014, *Mother Jones* article. You may have seen my response to that story when IBWA initially corrected this information during an interview with the [Weather Channel](#) on August 14, 2014. To help you revise your article, you may want to read IBWA's August 18, 2014 [press release](#), which should enable you to provide your readers with the facts about bottled water and California's drought.

For further assistance with your revision, below I present specific points that directly counter the misinformation presented in your article:

- Most of the bottled water from California sources is sold in California. It is not part of the U.S. bottled water industry's usual business model to ship bottles of water thousands of miles from where it is produced due to high transportation costs. Bottled water plants are located throughout the country and produce bottled water for customers in that area. [This map](#) shows the location of all IBWA's member company bottled water plants, which are located throughout the United States. Your article appears to contradict its own headline, given that your graphics, including the "Percent of U.S. retail sales" chart, reflect an industry with plants located across the entire United States.
- The amount of water used for bottling water in California is very small. Bottled water uses less than 0.004% of all water in the U.S and similarly in California, it uses a small fraction of 1%. Highlighting this very point, an April 12, 2015, *LA Times* [article](#) even notes that, "The entire nation consumes a bit more than 10 billion gallons of bottled water per year. California's total water use, according to 2010 figures from the U.S. Geological Survey, is 38 billion gallons *per day*."
- According to the UCLA Institute for Environment and Sustainability, at about 80%, agriculture is the largest user of water in the state, followed by urban residential use at 13%. The simple fact is that bottled water is neither the cause of nor the solution to the drought.
- Reducing the availability of bottled water would increase water use in California. Water—both bottled and tap—is the most efficient choice for hydration. On average, bottled water uses 1.32 liters of water to produce a liter of finished bottled water, and that includes the liter consumed. Removing bottled water as a choice, or encouraging people not to drink it, will push consumers to other beverages which take a lot more water to make.
- 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. Your article infers that the bottled water industry is acting out of compliance with state regulations and that is not the truth.

It's unfortunate that you did not reach out to IBWA when preparing your story, as we would have been able to provide you with the facts about bottled water. You should know that water resource management is a very important issue to the bottled water industry, and sustainable, protected, and naturally recharged water sources are the single most important aspect of our business. Our commitment to environmental excellence holds true wherever bottled water facilities are located. In addition, as Americans are making great efforts to choose healthier foods and beverages, it is not in the best interest of your readers to discourage consumption of this safe, healthy, and water-efficient product. You can learn more about bottled water by visiting www.bottledwater.org.

Thank you for reading and giving these notes your attention. I am also happy to speak with you directly about this important story. You can reach me at 703-647-4609. If not, please let me know you received this email.

Sincerely,

Chris Hogan
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