

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Public Oral Comment Meeting**

March 24, 2015

Comments on 2015 Dietary Advisory Guidelines Committee's Scientific Report

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- I. The International Bottled Water Association applauds the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee's recognition of how important water is to a healthy diet. Water— including bottled water – helps people pursue a healthy lifestyle and avoid sugar-sweetened beverage consumption. Water also plays a vital role in supporting nutritional health. Because 47% of added sugars in our diets come from beverages – and 20% of our daily caloric intake -- it is clear that Americans need guidance on how to be more aware of what they drink and to reduce their calorie consumption from beverages.

Here's our rationale:

- II. **Water is Essential-** Studies have shown that drinking plain water, instead of sugar-sweetened beverages, is associated with a decrease in the incidence of obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. People of all ages need to maintain proper hydration to function optimally, but healthy hydration helps ensure the prevention of nutrition-related noncommunicable diseases.
- III. **The Key to Consumption is Convenience-** The U.S. is an on-the-go society that depends on convenience when making food and beverage choices. Ideally, free water should be accessible to people everywhere, and our industry supports a reliable public drinking water infrastructure. But, the reality is almost everything people drink comes in a package. Thus, consumption of free water is not always a practical choice for consumers. Today, almost half of the water people drink comes in a bottle.

In cases where free tap water is not available, consumers should be encouraged to reach for bottled water instead of less-healthy packaged beverages. The 2015 Guidelines need to acknowledge that convenience and availability are key in getting people to change habits, like drinking more water.

If the Guidelines tell people to only drink “free water,” it could suggest that bottled water is a poor choice and cause them to turn to other less-healthy beverages. And, if the goal is to replace sugar-sweetened drinks with water, we will not meet that objective with freely accessible water alone.

- IV. **How do we get people to water-** It is important that bottled water be viewed as an “avenue to get people to water.” Although bottled water consumption is expected to surpass that of carbonated soft drinks in the next few years, studies show Americans are not drinking enough water and they are consuming a considerable amount of various sugar-sweetened beverages. Research has also shown people will choose sugar-sweetened beverages, when bottled water is not available.
- V. **Bottled Water is Sustainable-** From an environmental standpoint, when people choose bottled water instead of any other canned or bottled beverage, they are choosing less packaging, less energy consumption, and less use of natural resources. Bottled water’s environmental footprint is very small and the lowest of any packaged beverage.

In conclusion, we recommend enhanced messaging on water consumption in the 2015 Dietary Guidelines, including language that promotes drinking water in all forms. In addition, related information and documents, such as the “MyPlate” should also promote water consumption.

Thank you for your consideration in helping people find their way to water.