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Jennifer Kaplan
Reporter
Bloomberg
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Dear Ms. Kaplan:

Thank you for bringing attention to Americans' move toward bottled water as a healthy source of hydration and the expected shift to it being the most popular packaged beverage in the United States, in your article "[Bottled Water to Outsell Soda for First Time This Year](#)." I am writing to provide you with some additional information about several important topics raised in the story.

This shift away from sugary beverages toward healthy, reliable, and convenient bottled water is largely driven by an on-the-go society that is looking for alternatives for portable, zero-calorie packaged beverages. According to Beverage Marketing Corporation (BMC) total U.S. bottled water consumption increased to 11.7 billion gallons in 2015, up 7.9 percent from 2014. Per-capita consumption is up 7.1 percent in 2015, with every person in America drinking an average of 36.5 gallons of bottled water.

Importantly, bottled water competes with other packaged beverages, not tap water. Drinking water is always the best and healthiest choice for hydration, whether from a bottle, a filter, or the tap. Consumers who choose to drink bottled water can rely on its consistent record of safety and quality. All bottled water products - whether from groundwater or public water sources - are produced utilizing a multi-barrier approach. Measures in a multi-barrier approach 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 sealed bottle under sanitary conditions and sold to the consumer.

As you may already know, 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, the FDA regulations governing the

safety and quality of bottled water are as stringent as the EPA standards for tap water. And, in some very important cases like lead, bottled water regulations are substantially more stringent.

The bottled water industry also 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. Once the water enters the bottled water plant several processes are employed to ensure that it meets FDA standards for purified water, including the multi-barrier process described above.

As a popular retail food product, bottled water is available at many differing price points. When alluding to differences in cost between tap and bottled water, opponents typically cite retail prices from convenience or drug stores, where bottled water prices are often higher. BMC also notes that research shows consumers most often tend to buy bottled water in bulk from supermarkets or large discount retailers as they often prefer to purchase bottled water in cost-saving volume.

All bottled water containers are 100 percent recyclable, and at 37.04 percent, the recycling rate for single-serve PET plastic bottled water containers has more than doubled in the past decade. PET plastic bottled water containers are the most frequently recycled PET beverage container in curbside recycling programs and between 2000 and 2014, the average weight of a 16.9-ounce (half-liter) single-serve PET plastic bottle has declined nearly 48 percent. This has resulted in a savings of 6.2 billion pounds of PET resin since 2000.

Additional savings of virgin PET can be attributed to increasing use of recycled PET plastic (rPET) in bottled water containers. Between 2008 and 2014, BMC reports that the use of rPET in bottled water packaging increased by 20.8 percent.

The bottled water industry supports strong community recycling initiatives and recognizes that a continued focus on increased recycling is important for everyone. We are always looking for ways to strengthen existing programs and help to expand recycling efforts ever further, and are proud to work with groups like [The Recycling Partnership](#).

Thank you for reading and giving my concerns your attention. I respectfully request that you update the story and provide your readers with a more complete picture of bottled water. I am happy to speak with you directly should you wish to discuss any of these points or answer other questions you may have.

You can learn more about bottled water by visiting www.bottledwater.org.

Sincerely,

Chris Hogan
Vice President, Communications
International Bottled Water Association