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Mother Jones

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Dear Ms. Lenzer and Mr. Hendler,

I read with interest your news article [*“Starbucks' Bottled Water Comes From the Heart of the California Drought”*](#) on the MotherJones.com website. I am writing to make you aware of several factual errors in the statements you make about bottled water.

Because your article and the map illustrating it misinform consumers by presenting numerous inaccurate arguments, I respectfully request that both be removed or updated to ensure your readers receive factual information. Here's why.

The overarching argument in this article appears to unfairly single out just one consumer product instead of applying to all products that use water. Bottled water production is just one of hundreds of commercial industries that use water in California. And, compared to many industries, bottled water is among the lowest and most efficient water users. Bottled water accounts for less than 0.011 percent of all water used in the United States and only about 0.02 percent of the water used in California.

I would also like to point out an important omission. The article correctly references the fact that it takes on average 1.32 liters of water to manufacture one liter of bottled water. However, it neglected to mention that includes the liter of water consumed.

The bottled water industry complies with California's regulatory framework, which applies to other water users, and will continue to do so. All bottlers adhere to federal, state, and local regulations, which

may include withdrawal limits and fees, taxes, local regulatory oversight, and applicable facility monitoring and inspection.

The majority of bottled water products produced in California are consumed in California. And if California's 38 million people were not drinking bottled water, they would be consuming nearly the same amount of water from municipal taps. So, bottled water is not putting a significant strain on water resources in that state, contrary to statements made in your article.

Mother Jones appears to be insistent on misleading readers and consumers regarding the facts about bottled water. For example, as you know from previous letters from IBWA to Mother Jones, bottled water is produced at hundreds of plants across the U.S., not only in California as you repeatedly infer.

I again draw your attention to [this map](#), showing the location of all IBWA's member company bottled water plants, which are located throughout the United States and primarily serve customers in their local and regional markets. It is simply not economical to ship bottled water great distances because of the transportation costs.

IBWA and its members are committed to the responsible and efficient use of all natural resources related to bottled water production. Our industry is proud to continuously be on the forefront of important issues such as water conservation and management, the efficient use of water, and responsibly managing groundwater and spring water resources.

Many IBWA member companies in California have already enacted a variety of water conservation strategies, including:

- Auditing total water use at all of their facilities
- Looking for leaks in all of their piping and tanks
- Planting drought-resistant vegetation at their facilities
- Reminding employees to be good stewards of the environment and encouraging water conservation
- Implementing water use restrictions at their facilities

In addition, some member companies are delivering bottled water to communities where local water supplies have run dry due to drought conditions. Other companies are contacting the California Resources Control Board to discuss ways they can be helpful and contacting their local water agencies to discuss how they can partner with the agencies to conserve water.

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.

Sincerely,

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