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August 19, 2014

Ms. Julia Lurie
Reporter
Mother Jones

Via email:
jlurie@motherjones.com

Hi Julia,

My name is Chris Hogan and I am IBWA's vice president of communications. I wanted to reach out to you directly regarding your August 11, 2014, Mother Jones article, "Bottled Water Comes From the Most Drought-Ridden Places in the Country." I also wanted to see if you are open to an in-person phone conversation about this important story? My direct line is 703-647-4609. If not, please let me know you've received this email.

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. Your article in Mother Jones, which has been picked up by other media outlets, and the drought map that accompanied it, presented numerous arguments that are not accurate. I highlighted a few of these important facts on the Weather Channel last week: <http://vimeo.com/103814199>

In addition, we also issued a press release today (<http://www.bottledwater.org/facts-about-bottled-water-and-california%E2%80%99s-drought>) to help provide consumers with some additional facts and information about bottled water and California's drought. Below, I have outlined some specific points that I hope will provide you more detail about the article's claims which simply are not true:

- The amount of water used for bottling water in California is very small. In fact, bottled water production from groundwater sources accounts for less than 0.02% of the total groundwater withdrawn in the U.S. each year. While that figure may vary slightly by location, the amount of water used for bottled water is only a fraction of overall water use in California, or any other state.

- To put it in context, the entire U.S. bottled water market was about 10 billion gallons in 2013. The city of Los Angeles goes through that amount of tap water in less than three weeks. 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%. Your article even concedes that bottled water has virtually no impact on the drought or California water supplies, yet the larger tone of the story and the way it was released through Climate Desk, easily confuses readers and leaves an invalid impression. The other industries and products that legitimately impact water issues in California are barely touched upon, leaving readers to draw inaccurate conclusions.
- Water is essential to drinking and humans need hydration. Water – both bottled and tap -- is the most efficient choice because when you reach for anything else to drink, it's using more water to produce and package. That includes any other beverage from coffee to beer, juice to carbonated soft drinks. Most of the bottled water from California sources is sold in California. It is not part of our 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 through the country and produce bottled water for customers in that area. I have attached a map that shows the location of all our member company bottled water plants, located across the U.S. It is also not helpful to show only 4 out of the scores of brands sold and produced all over the country on your map as if these are the only ones operating in the U.S., especially considering one of the brands is mostly sold in California.

Thank you for reading and giving these notes your attention. I hope it clarifies the misinformation being circulated and posted and I hope that you would consider correcting your story so that it better reflects the facts about bottled water and California.

Best regards,
Chris

Sincerely,

(sent electronically)

Chris Hogan
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