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April 20, 2016

Kurt Repanshek  
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**Re: *National Parks Traveler news story: [National Park Service Far From Achieving Hydration Station Goals?](#) By Kurt Repanshek published on NPT online on April 10, 2016.***

Dear Editor,

We are delighted your news outlet is reporting on hydration issues at National Parks. However, we feel that your article may contain misleading information and lack important details that will help your readers understand the issues surrounding bottled water sales bans at our National Parks.

Your article states that in the National Parks Service's (NPS) report to congress a list of parks had achieved reductions in waste following a bottled water ban. However, if you look at that report, you find it states that parks "could" eliminate waste. Never does the report say what amount of waste any park actually "did" eliminate as a result of implementing a bottled water sales ban, and no park had, "percentages of reduction in their total waste stream and recycling load," as reported in your news story.

For your convenience, here is a link to the NPS report cited in your story:

<https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/foia/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&PageID=5113026>

Your source for this story has taken an expected outcome and declared it as a fact of having occurred by removing the word "could" and making the word "eliminate" past tense so it sounds as if it did happen. In addition, there is no data in the NPS report that supports the idea that parks' "expected" outcomes actually "did" happen. There is no data in the NPS report that supports the idea that these "projected" reductions actually "did" happen.

It is true that the bottled water industry opposes banning the sale of bottled water yet continuing to allow the sale of other less healthy, plastic packaged drinks — including sodas, sports drinks, teas, milk, beer, and wine — to park visitors. When bottled water is not available, there is clear evidence that shows people will choose other less healthy packaged drinks, not necessarily tap water. A [study of the University of Vermont's bottled water sales ban](#) found consumption of sugary drinks grew (by 33 percent) and the number of plastic bottles entering the waste stream grew (by 6 percent), despite installing water filling stations for reusable bottles.

It is important to note that 70 percent of what people consume these days comes in some sort of packaging. PET plastic used to make bottled water containers is the most lightweight and recycled packaging of all beverages. Bottled water also uses the lowest energy and water in production, and it is the healthiest beverage on the shelf.

The NPS bottled water sales ban policy ignores the fact that the bottled water industry works hard to provide consumers with healthy hydration and promotes environmentally responsible packaging practices and recycling.

Rather than continuing a discriminatory policy, the International Bottled Water Association (IBWA) [has recommended](#) that Congress and the Administration overturn Policy Memorandum 11-03 as ineffective and not in the public interest. The NPS should then be directed to develop an effective and fair recycling program that uniformly, consistently, and comprehensively addresses the issues of waste disposal and/or littering of all products sold or brought into all the parks.

As Americans are making great efforts to choose healthier foods and beverages, it is not in the best interest to discourage consumption of this safe, healthy, and water-efficient product.

Thank you for reading and giving my concerns your attention. I respectfully request that you correct your online story because as it is misleading consumers. 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](http://www.bottledwater.org).

Sincerely,

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