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August 10, 2017

Robert Weimer
Executive Director
Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority
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Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Info@pgh2o.com

Jon Delano – Reporter
cc: Dicky Nassar – Senior Assignment Editor
cc: Bill Shissler – Executive Producer
KDKA-TV
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Dear Mr. Weimer and Mr. Delano,

I'm writing in regard to a false statement made by Mr. Weimer in Mr. Delano's KDKA-TV news story "Website Aims To Alert Public To Contaminants In Tap Water" (<http://pittsburgh.cbslocal.com/2017/08/08/lead-in-tap-water-website-ewg/>). In this news story, Mr. Weimer says:

"They [bottled water] could have contaminants that we [Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority] would not allow in our drinking water."

Mr. Weimer's statement is completely untrue. Bottled water is comprehensively regulated at both the federal and state level. Federal law requires that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) bottled water regulations must be as protective of the public health as Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards for tap water. And, in some case, such as lead, the FDA bottled water regulations are more stringent than the EPA tap water standards. In addition, researchers have estimated 19.5 million cases of acute gastrointestinal illness are caused by tap water each year. Read more: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18020305>. In contrast, a survey of state bottled water regulatory authorities conducted by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found there were zero outbreaks of foodborne illness

from bottled water over a five-year period.

<http://www.bottledwater.org/public/CSA%20FINAL%20103015.pdf>

Moreover, if you look at required testing, bottled water, on a gallon-per-gallon basis, is required to be tested 30 times more often than tap water. We would also note that when testing determines that tap water exceeds the legal limits for contaminants set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the water supply continues to be distributed to consumers, with applicable public notifications (e.g., health alerts, boil water alerts). In stark contrast, the water in every single bottled water container must meet strict standards set by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). If any bottled water product is found to exceed the FDA standards of quality, it is subject to immediate recall from the marketplace and the company that makes the product faces significant criminal and civil penalties. Another important difference is that for certain substances, tap water testing results can exceed EPA's established maximum contaminant level on one or more occasions as long as it meets the EPA standard for that contaminant based on a quarterly or 12-month average. Bottled water testing results can never be averaged for any substance. See more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gPgWVYvQ-es>. For references and additional information on the differences between tap water and bottled water, see these reports: [*"Bottled Water and Tap Water: Just the Facts"*](#) and [*"Microbial Health Risks of Drinking Waters in the United States."*](#)

The fact that bottled water is now America's No. 1 packaged beverage, by volume, (outpacing carbonated soft drinks for the first time in history) shows that Americans are striving for a better, healthier lifestyle. To help with those efforts, drinking water – whether from the tap, bottled, or filtered – should be encouraged. With the high rates of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease in our on-the-go society, bottled water provides a safe, healthy, convenient beverage choice. Discouraging people from choosing this healthy drink option is not in the public interest.

It's a shame that Mr. Delano didn't contact IBWA to get the industry's point of view and to verify statements made in his story. I encourage him to do so in the future. In addition, I respectfully request that KDKA-TV update its story to correct the false statement made by Mr. Weimer.

And I would ask Mr. Weimer to please refrain from making false public statements about bottled water.

Thank you both for reading and giving my concerns your attention.

Sincerely,

Jill Culora
Vice President of Communications
International Bottled Water Association