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**The Atlantic**

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Dear Ms. Groner

I read with interest your December 30, 2014, article "*The Politics of Drinking Water*," ([http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/12/the-politics-of-drinking-water/384081/#disqus\\_thread](http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/12/the-politics-of-drinking-water/384081/#disqus_thread)) published on Atlantic.com. I am writing to make you aware of several serious errors in this article. It is unfortunate that *The Atlantic* did not reach out to the International Bottled Water Association, as it would have helped provide a more accurate article about bottled water.

Specifically, here is a summary of the statements that are factually incorrect:

**1. Bottled water made using "municipal water sources" is just "tap water" in a bottle. UNTRUE.**

Purified bottled water, typically sourced from municipal water systems, is not just tap water in a bottle. Once this water enters the bottled water plant, several processes are employed to ensure that it meets the FDA's purified water standard. These treatments 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 bottle under sanitary conditions and sold to the consumer.

## **2. Single Serve bottled water is more expensive than gasoline. UNTRUE.**

According to the Beverage Marketing Corporation (BMC), the average wholesale price per gallon of domestic non-sparkling bottled water was \$1.21 per gallon in 2014. 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.

Bottled water competes with other packaged beverages, not tap water. In fact, most people who drink bottled water also drink tap water. 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 typically higher, however this doesn't accurately reflect the true average price of bottled water.

## **3. PET plastic used for bottling water creates an environmental cost. UNTRUE.**

Bottled water actually has the lowest water and energy use ratio of all packaged beverages. (Read more: <http://www.bottledwater.org/bottled-water-industry-has-lowest-water-and-energy-use-ratios-among-all-packaged-beverages>) And since bottled water is being consumed in place of other higher-environmental cost beverages, bottled water is actually reducing the overall packaged beverage consumption footprint.

70 percent of the growth in bottled water sales has come from people switching from other packaged beverages to bottled water. Carbonated beverages are also packaged in PET plastic, but because these drinks are carbonated, the PET plastic containers must be much thicker (24 grams per 20 oz. container) compared to the PET plastic used in bottled water containers (less than 10 grams per 20 oz. container).

In addition, less than four percent of the world's oil production goes to produce all types of plastics. PET plastic accounts for less than ½ of 1 percent (and that figure refers to all food and beverage containers and other packaging made from PET plastic). (Read more: <http://www.petresin.org/sustainability.asp>)

## **4. Diverting plastic bottles from landfills.**

All bottled water containers are 100 percent recyclable. At 38.04 percent, the recycling rate for single-serve PET plastic bottled water containers more than doubled between 2003 and 2012. PET plastic bottled water containers are also the most frequently recycled PET beverage container in curbside recycling programs.

We believe that it is not in the best interest of your readers to discourage the consumption of this safe, healthy, convenient product.

I respectfully request that your article be updated to reflect the facts mentioned above, as the article as it currently appears, seriously misinforms consumers about the safety and quality of bottled water.

Sincerely,

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