

International Bottled Water Association

Statement Regarding Microplastic Particles in Bottled Water August 2019

There have been several media reports about microplastic particles in bottled water products. Consumers can remain confident that bottled water, like all food and beverages, is strictly regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and is safe to drink.

While many of the articles on microplastics have focused solely on bottled water, it is important to note that thousands of other food and beverage products also use plastic containers. Moreover, and perhaps even more important, microplastic particles are found in all aspects of our environment – soil, air and water.

There currently is no scientific consensus on a testing methodology or the potential health impacts of microplastic particles. Therefore, reports in the media and online do nothing more than unnecessarily scare consumers.

This point was recently confirmed in an August 2019 World Health Organization (WHO) analysis of current research on microplastic particles in drinking water. The WHO report found: “Based on the limited information we have, microplastics in drinking water don’t appear to pose a health risk at current levels.” The report also stated: “There are no studies on the impacts of ingested microplastics on human health and there are only a limited number of animal studies of questionable reliability and relevance.” The report also noted that “[a]lthough there is insufficient information to draw firm conclusions on the toxicity related to the physical hazard of plastic particles, particularly the nano size particles, no reliable information suggests it is a concern through drinking-water exposure.”

Because there is no scientific evidence to suggest that microplastic particles pose a health risk, FDA has not issued any regulations concerning these substances in foods and beverages. Any regulatory action concerning microplastic particles would need to be based on sound science, including demonstrating a correlation between the levels of this substance found in foods and beverages and any potential adverse health effects.

Bottled water, as a packaged food product, is strictly and comprehensively regulated by the FDA. All bottled water products are produced utilizing a multi-barrier approach. From source to finished product, a multi-barrier approach helps prevent possible harmful contamination to the finished product as well as storage, production, and transportation equipment. Many of the steps in a multi-barrier system are effective in safeguarding bottled water from microbiological and other contamination. Measures in a multi-barrier approach may include one or more of the following: source protection,

source monitoring, reverse osmosis, distillation, micro-filtration, carbon filtration, ozonation, and ultraviolet (UV) light.

As always, the bottled water industry is committed to providing consumers with the safest and highest quality products and we are following any scientific developments on this subject closely.

For more information about bottled water, visit IBWA's website: www.bottledwater.org

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The International Bottled Water Association (IBWA) is the authoritative source of information about all types of bottled waters, including spring, mineral, purified, artesian, and sparkling. Founded in 1958, IBWA's membership includes U.S. and international bottlers, distributors and suppliers. IBWA is committed to working with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which regulates bottled water as a packaged food product, to set comprehensive and stringent standards for safe, high-quality bottled water products.

In addition to FDA regulations, IBWA member bottlers must adhere to the IBWA Bottled Water Code of Practice, which mandates additional standards and practices that in some cases are more stringent than federal and state regulations. A key feature of the IBWA Bottled Water Code of Practice is a mandatory annual plant inspection by an independent, third-party organization.

IBWA is proud to be a partner with Keep America Beautiful and a supporter of Drink Up, an initiative of former First Lady Michelle Obama and the Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA), which encourages Americans to drink more water more often – whether from the tap, a filter, or in a bottle. Choosing water is always the healthy choice.