

April 26, 1999

FDA

Jane E. Henney, M.D.
Commissioner, U.S. Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

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Dear Dr. Henney,

I am writing to urge you to adopt strict requirements for bottled water safety, labeling, and public disclosure. Specifically, I would like to see your agency:

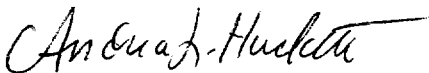
- set strict limits for contaminants of concern in bottled water, including arsenic, heterotrophic-plate-count bacteria, E. coli and other parasites and pathogens, and synthetic organic chemicals such as "phthalates";
- apply the rules to all bottled water whether carbonated or not and whether sold intrastate or interstate; and
- require bottlers to display information on their labels about the levels of contaminants of concern found in the water, the water's exact source, and whether it meets health criteria set by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Centers for Disease Control for killing parasites like cryptosporidium.

Sales of bottled water in this country have exploded in recent years, but, as you know, this bottled water is not necessarily cleaner or safer than most tap water -- about one-fourth or more of bottled water is actually just bottled tap water (sometimes further treated, sometimes not) and is subject to less rigorous testing and purity standards than those which apply to city tap water.

In addition, your agency *exempts* between 60 - 70% of bottled water from national standards because it is not part of interstate trade and further exempts many carbonated and other waters as well. Bottled water marketing can be (and often is) misleading: the actual source of the water is often not made clear, and bottlers are not required to disclose any contaminants that may have been found in the water.

For these reasons I urge you to adopt strict requirements for bottled water.

Thank you,

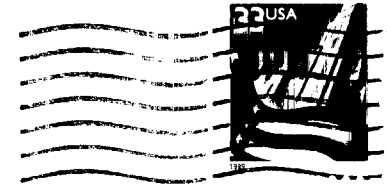


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