

## International Bottled Water Association

# Media Statement

April 17, 2024

### **Bottled water industry applauds EPA efforts to address PFAS in tap water**

*Alexandria, VA* – The bottled water industry applauds the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for setting limits for “forever chemicals” [also known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)] in tap water. The move by EPA to regulate six PFAS substances in tap water will help protect public health and further strengthen the reliability of public water systems, which the bottled water industry fully supports.

While not currently mandated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), since 2019 IBWA has required its members to test and comply with standards of quality for 18 PFAS substances in all the products they sell. Federal law requires FDA bottled water regulations to be as protective of public health as EPA standards for tap water. So, now that EPA has finalized PFAS standards for tap water, FDA is required to evaluate what PFAS standards are appropriate for bottled water. In most cases, FDA adopts the same standards as EPA.

In recent years, FDA has tested for PFAS in bottled water (carbonated and non-carbonated) through a targeted survey and through the FDA’s Total Diet Study samples. Results from the studies did not detect PFAS in any sample.

IBWA’s PFAS actions reinforce the commitment of IBWA members to always provide consumers with the safest and highest quality bottled water products. Testing for PFAS provides consumers, local and state governments, and disaster and emergency relief personnel with further assurance that bottled water is a safe and convenient product for everyday use and in times of need when tap water is compromised.

IBWA bottler members make up approximately 73% of the U.S. bottled water market, by volume, and include many popular national, regional, and store-labelled brands.

### **Background**

Bottled water is comprehensively regulated by FDA and is among the safest food products on the market. Bottled water must comply with the general FDA good manufacturing practices (GMPs) for foods (21 CFR Part 117), specific bottled water GMPs (21 CFR Part 129), bottled water standards of identity (21 CFR 165.110 (a)) and bottled water standards of quality (21 CFR 165.110 (b)). By law, the SOQs for bottled water must be as protective of the public health as EPA’s regulations for tap water.

All bottled water products — whether from groundwater or public water sources — 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.

Consumers should also understand that “purified” bottled water, which is made by using water from a public water system, is not “just tap water in a bottle.” Once the tap water enters the bottled water plant, several processes are employed to ensure that it meets FDA’s “purified water” standard, which is based on the U.S. Pharmacopeia, 23rd Revision. These treatments can include reverse osmosis, distillation, or de-ionization. The finished water product, which is far different from the water from a public water system, is then placed in a bottle under sanitary conditions and sold to the consumer.

For more information about bottled water, visit IBWA’s website: [www.bottledwater.org](http://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.*