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Press Release:
January 31, 2008

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**INTERNATIONAL BOTTLED WATER ASSOCIATION
STANDS READY TO ASSIST GAO IN BOTTLED WATER STUDY**

Bottled Water Is a Healthy Beverage That is Produced by an Industry with an Outstanding Tradition of Environmental Stewardship, Protection, and Sustainability

(ALEXANDRIA, VA) – The International Bottled Water Association (IBWA) stands ready to work with the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) as it considers a request by two members of the U.S. House Subcommittee on the Environment and Hazardous Materials to study specific issues concerning bottled water and tap water. The bottled water industry is confident that the facts will demonstrate conclusively the bottled water industry's outstanding record of environmental stewardship, conservation, and sustainability practices. IBWA also believes that the GAO report will show that the safety, quality, and labeling of bottled water are comprehensively regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and state governments.

IBWA President and CEO Joe Doss stated, "IBWA and the bottled water industry welcome the opportunity to share important facts about bottled water with the GAO and our nation's elected officials as they undertake this task." To help clarify a number of issues raised in the Committee press release, IBWA provides the following bottled water facts:

- Bottled water is a safe, healthy, convenient food product that is comprehensively regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and state governments.
- Bottled water is one of thousands of packaged foods and beverages—not to mention other consumer products--used by consumers every day. Any actions to reduce the environmental impact of packaging must focus on all consumer goods and not target any one industry.
- The bottled water industry, like many others in the food and beverage industry, has taken actions to reduce its environmental footprint through the use of ever lighter weight packaging and direct support and involvement in recycling educational and advocacy programs. Bottled water containers are fully recyclable and should be properly recycled through whatever system a local municipality has in place.
- FDA has determined that source labeling for bottled water is not necessary or required if a brand is in compliance with the FDA bottled water Standard of Identity, Standard of Quality, Good Manufacturing Practices, and other regulations.
- The source of a bottled water product, as well as other brand information, may be obtained by contacting the bottled water company directly. According to FDA law, all food products, including bottled water, must include the name and location of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor. Moreover, many bottled water companies include other contact information—such as a telephone number or web site address--on the product label.
- FDA and state governments recognize groundwater and municipal water systems as legitimate and valid sources for bottled water production. There are specific labeling and other standards to help ensure consumers are aware of the type of bottled water they choose.
- Moreover, it is important to note that bottled water companies that use municipal source water treat and purify the water before it is bottled and delivered to consumers as a packaged food product. If a bottled water is sourced from a municipal water system and has not been further treated, FDA requires the label to state that it is from a municipal or community water system.

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- The bottled water industry is a minimal user of groundwater resources and accounts for only 0.02% (2/100 of one percent) of all groundwater withdrawals in the United States according to a 2005 study by the Drinking Water Research Foundation (DWRF). However, the bottled water industry aggressively supports comprehensive groundwater resource management policies. IBWA member bottlers recognize the critical importance of environmental conservation and stewardship of all water resources.
- At a time when obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and other maladies are on the rise, Americans must be able to choose the healthful benefits of bottled water, which is growing in popularity because of its consistent quality, taste and convenience. Many people choose bottle water over other beverages because it does not contain calories, caffeine, sugar, artificial flavors or colors, alcohol or other ingredients consumers may wish to avoid or moderate.
- The bottled water industry has always been at the forefront of relief efforts during natural disasters and other catastrophic events by supplying millions of bottles of water in response to these types of emergencies. Clean, safe water is a critical need for citizens and first responders immediately following a natural disaster or other catastrophic event. Unfortunately, the availability of water from public water systems is often compromised in the aftermath of such an event. During these times, bottled water is the often best option to deliver clean safe drinking water quickly into affected areas.

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The International Bottled Water Association (IBWA) is the authoritative source of information about all types of bottled waters. 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, and state governments to set stringent standards for safe, high quality bottled water products. In addition to FDA and state regulations, the Association requires member bottlers to 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. Media inquiries can be directed to IBWA Vice President, Communications Stephen R. Kay at 703-647-4609 or skay@bottledwater.org. IBWA: www.bottledwater.org.