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July 19, 2010

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

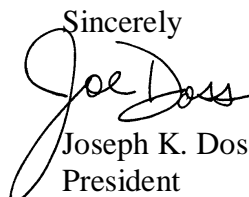
As you work to develop the President's budget for Fiscal Year 2012, we respectfully urge you to make the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) a major priority. Consistent funding increases over a sustained period of time are essential to restoring the agency's capacity to handle a rapidly growing list of complex public health responsibilities. The agency's FY 10 staffing level from budget authority appropriations is the same as it was in 1994.

As you know, FDA regulates products that represent nearly 25 percent of consumer spending in America. However, today's FDA faces severe resource constraints due to years of chronic underfunding and an exponential increase in the agency's public health responsibilities including serious threats such as bioterrorism, the H1N1 Influenza Virus, and the increasing globalization of the products FDA regulates.

Because bottled water is a vital part of the packaged food and beverage industry, the International Bottled Water Association (IBWA) strongly supports the need for adequate appropriated funding for FDA to meet its growing food safety responsibilities. IBWA is comprised of over 400 bottled water bottler, distributor and supplier companies who operate both nationally and in specific regions of the country. In order to help ensure consumer confidence in our products, we depend on the scientific and regulatory capacity of FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) and FDA's related field inspectional activities. FDA testified before Congress just last summer on the agency's substantial responsibilities in overseeing the safety and quality of bottled water, and we support the necessary appropriated funding for the agency to carry out those responsibilities.

Continuing chronic underfunding of FDA affects our public health, hinders our economy and compromises our national security. We are requesting at least a twenty percent increase over the FY11 budget.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely

Joseph K. Doss
President