

Bottled water brands form single lobby group

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Evian, Nestlé Waters, Danone Waters and Highland Spring are joining forces to form a lobby group to tackle the backlash against the bottle water industry. The Natural Hydration Council will come into operation on September 1.

It will see its members go on an information-led PR campaign aimed at educating the public about bottled water. The industry has been hit by sustained attacks from politicians and the media about the negative impact it is inflicting on the environment.

While much of the debate has been around bottled water versus tap water, the NHC will push the point that not only is this not a like-for-like comparison, but that as a drinks category, bottled water is the healthiest soft drink alternative.

A BBC Panorama documentary earlier this year slammed water brands such as Evian, Volvic and Buxton for the harm their production does to the environment.

Just last month consumer group Which? released a report claiming that many people believe bottled water tastes the same as tap water. It also reported that bottled water production processes waste an estimated two gallons of water for every gallon purified to put into a bottle.

Patrick Kolatis, director of marketing for Danone Waters says: "The debate is getting so out of control and it is being particularly driven by media and the tap industry. We're really keen to provide that balanced view and give people that informed choice."