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Beverage Makers Cut Water Use as Production Rose

A new industry study found lower water, energy and emissions intensity across 1,600 facilities worldwide.

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The beverage industry improved water, energy and emissions efficiency across a broad set of facilities even as production rose, according to a new benchmarking study released Thursday by the Beverage Industry Environmental Roundtable, known as BIER.

The study analyzed environmental performance at more than 1,600 facilities worldwide and drew on data from 2020, 2022 and 2024. It covered 15 companies operating on six continents and found that global beverage production increased 8% over the reporting period. During the same time, participating companies reduced their water use ratio by 3%, their energy use ratio by 4% and their emissions ratio by 11%.

BIER said the results show that production growth can be separated from environmental impact when companies invest in efficiency and track performance over time. The group, which was founded in 2006, said the benchmarking program is meant to give beverage makers a common set of metrics they can use to compare operations, identify weak points and measure progress.

The report also pointed to water risk as a growing concern for the sector. More than 60% of the facilities in the study are located in areas facing at least medium water risk, according to BIER. The group said more than half of those sites are projected to face medium to extremely high water stress by 2030, raising questions about long-term supply security and operational planning.

That risk matters because beverage production depends heavily on reliable access to water for brewing, bottling and cleaning. Companies in the sector have faced increasing pressure from investors, regulators and customers to show that they are managing water use more carefully while also cutting energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

BIER said its benchmarking work is intended to support those efforts by giving member companies standardized data and a way to share practices across the industry. The organization described the study as part of a broader push to move sustainability efforts from commitments to measurable action.

Erica Pann, BIER’s executive director, said in a statement that the study shows the value of sustained collaboration across the beverage sector because it helps companies identify practical opportunities, prioritize investments and track progress on shared environmental goals.

The coalition includes major global beverage companies such as Anheuser-Busch InBev, Carlsberg Group, The Coca-Cola Company, Diageo, Heineken, Molson Coors, PepsiCo and Suntory Global Spirits.