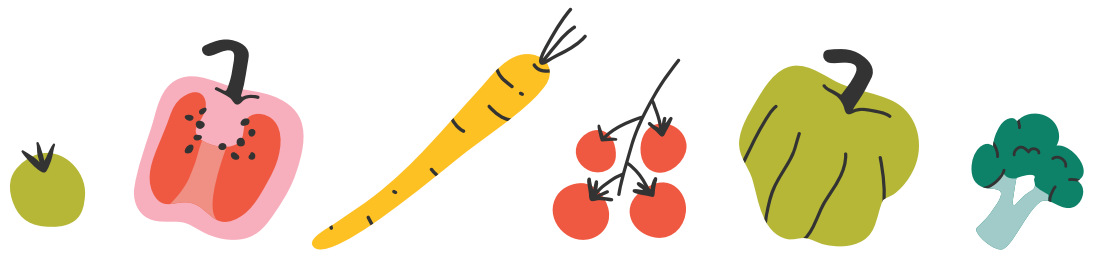


WHY TAX SUGARY DRINKS?

Sugary drinks are the leading source of sugars in the American diet and increase the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and tooth decay – negative health outcomes experienced disproportionately by low-income and communities of color.

KEY DETAILS:

- Generates \$221 million annually
- 60% of revenue dedicated to health equity, 40% to foundational public health programs
- \$1.75 cents per oz tax on sugary drinks
- Community oversight to monitor and publicly report collections, allocations and spending



Investing in Social and Health Equity

SB 5371 (Robinson, Carlyle, Conway, Dhingra, Pederson & Saldana)

Addressing persistent inequities that impact the health of Washingtonians with a tax on sugary drinks to increase investments in health equity and public health.

AN EFFECTIVE, EQUITABLE APPROACH

“As a lifelong advocate for social justice and equity in the diverse communities across our state, I am confident that SB 5371 will be an effective approach for increasing investments in health equity by taxing sugary drinks. I urge the State Legislature to approve SB 5371 as part of their larger efforts to prioritize equity in Washington.” – *Estela Ortega, executive director of El Centro de la Raza*

“We support a tax on sugary drinks to fund health equity and public health programs because it will help advance our mission to support and promote good nutrition, breastfeeding and equitable access to healthy foods in our state,” – *Carolyn Conner, Executive Director, Nutrition First*

“Today, Indigenous peoples experience diabetes and heart disease at disproportionate rates. That’s why we support SB 5371 to implement a tax on sugary drinks in order to increase investments in health equity across Washington so we may better address these disparities and injustices.” – *Esther Lucero (Diné), CEO of Seattle Indian Health Board*

... TO IMPROVE HEALTH ACCESS AND OUTCOMES

“As a pediatrician who has worked with communities across our state to improve the health of kids and adults, I believe that a tax on sugary drinks to fund community health programs is a multi-pronged approach for mitigating inequities in Washington,” – *Maxine Hayes, MD, pediatrician; former Director, Washington State Public Health Office*

“Hunger is a public health and racial equity problem: communities of color in Washington are 1.5 to nearly 2.5 times more likely to be food insecure than white people. SB 5371 will significantly increase investments in healthy food access efforts for those most at risk, as well as addressing immediate and long-term health inequities.” – *Claire Lane, director, Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition*

“As a physician and American Heart Association volunteer, I strongly support SB 5371 as a tool for raising critical funds to invest in communities that have long experienced health inequities and that have been the target of marketing by soda companies.” – *Ruchi Kapoor, MD, president-elect, AHA Puget Sound Board of Directors; practicing heart specialist in Seattle*

WHAT ARE SUGARY DRINKS?

As defined in SB 5371, sugary drinks are any kind of drink that contains one or more sweeteners that add calories. This includes sports drinks, energy drinks, fruit drinks, sweetened teas and coffees and sodas. It also includes flavored water and juices with added sweeteners. It does not include any drink in which natural milk is the primary ingredient (the ingredient listed first in the product ingredient list), 100% juice or where water and grains, nuts, legumes, or seeds constitute the first two ingredients in the product.

AN EFFECTIVE APPROACH:

Seattle's tax on sugary drinks has raised \$24 million annually for education efforts and helped provide food to families during the pandemic, including \$5 million in grocery vouchers. The tax contributed to a 22% reduction in purchases of these products. A study of the sugary drinks tax in Philadelphia "found no evidence that the tax resulted in job losses in the overall economy, private sector, limited-service restaurants or convenience stores."

HOW DO SUGARY DRINK TAXES IMPACT CONSUMERS?

Unlike a regressive sales tax on consumer goods, a tax on sugary drinks is easily avoided by purchasing other, and healthier, beverages-- similar to taxes on other legal, yet unhealthy products like alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis.

DO SUGARY DRINKS HURT BUSINESSES AND WORKERS?

No. Studies of taxes on sugary drinks in cities such as Philadelphia and Berkeley show no significant impact on business revenues or workers - consumers simply choose to purchase healthier beverages.

IS THIS THE RIGHT TIME FOR A NEW TAX ON SUGARY DRINKS?

Yes. The pandemic has underscored the need for renewed investment in public health programs, not just for COVID-19 response, but to finally address harmful inequities in health access and awareness. A tax on sugary drinks supports investments in core public health programs, access to healthy, affordable food, promotion of healthy lifestyles, Medicaid expansion and expansion of early care and education programs.

It will also help reduce consumption of products that is scientifically linked to negative health outcomes, and which are disproportionately marketed to communities of color, especially youth.

SUPPORTERS INCLUDE:

American Heart Association
American Diabetes Association
Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition
Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition
Consejo Hispano
Dr. Maxine Hayes, former WA State Public Health Officer
El Centro de la Raza
Healthy Food America
MultiCare Health System
Nutrition First
Seattle Indian Health Board
SHAPE Washington

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