

COMMUNITY BENEFITS OF TAXING SUGARY-SWEETENED BEVERAGES

CA4Health, a program of the Public Health Institute, worked with the San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative to create resident-led advocacy groups throughout the County of San Diego. The efforts focused on building resident and legislative support to remove the ban on local soda tax measures in California because one of the most important elements to help promote health equity and drive transformative systemic change is centering community within efforts by hearing from individuals most impacted.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- A tax on sugary drinks can help raise local revenues for important health programs, reduce health and economic inequities, reduce the rates of costly preventable chronic diseases, and increase awareness about the harmful effects of sugary beverages and foods.
- Sugary drinks are the #1 single source of added sugar in American diets with about 60% of children and nearly half of adults consuming them every day.
- The direct medical costs to California for care of type 2 diabetes, only one of the diseases associated with excessive added sugar consumption, amount to over \$27 billion annually.
- More than 1 in 3 children living in San Diego County will develop childhood obesity.
- Diabetes death rates in the county are highest for Native Americans, nearly three times higher than the total rate, followed by African Americans.
- 995,121 residents live in food deserts where affordable healthy foods are not easily obtainable.
- In 2017–2018 among all fifth-, seventh- and ninth-grade children in the county, over one-third (34%) were overweight or obese.

SAN DIEGO RESIDENT'S COMMENTS AND CONCERNS:



- *“Corporations’ sell unhealthy products and profit without enough regulation; we want something back in return!”*
- *“Help us lessen the impacts of diabetes and COVID-19 in our communities”.*
- *“All policy is health policy because of the impact on people”.*
- *“We are fighting against a monster (Big Soda) and we are not afraid”!*
- *“We need access to affordable healthy foods and health care to prevent further harm”.*
- *“Distribute future revenues to community organizations across different districts rooted in community”.*
- *“We want accountability and to ensure we are being heard to mitigate future harms on our children”.*

CA PREEMPTION LAWSUIT:

On October 1, 2021, the Sacramento County (California) Superior Court ruled that the penalty provision of California’s Keep Groceries Affordable Act of 2018 is unconstitutional. This win paves the way for local voters in CA Charter Cities to consider passing a sugary drink tax to raise much-needed funding for public health efforts without fear of losing city revenues.

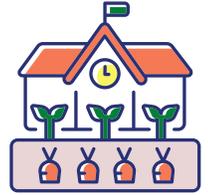
INVESTING SUGARY DRINK TAX REVENUE TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS:

Seven cities in the United States have implemented sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) excise taxes to reduce SSB consumption and generate revenue to address important community health needs. Revenues to invest into community health currently range from \$0.3 million in Albany, CA to \$77.7 million in Philadelphia, reflecting differences in tax rates, sales volumes, and population. Before the statewide preemption law (AB 1838), Berkeley, San Francisco, Oakland, and Albany all passed local sugary drink taxes which have led to decreased consumption and increased investments in health equity solutions in their communities.



BERKELEY, CA

Local revenues fund school gardens, nutrition classes, oral health programs, community, and youth programs, and support a healthier retail environment. A community advisory board has awarded grants to local nonprofits like the YMCA and Healthy Black Families for health and nutrition education, and to the Berkeley Unified School District for its cooking, gardening, and nutrition education program. Download fact sheet, ‘Policy Profile: Berkeley, CA Sugary Drink Tax’ for more details. Learn more about where revenues are being allocated in Berkeley. So where is the money going in Berkeley?



NAVAJO NATION

In 2014, the Navajo Nation passed the *Healthy Diné Nation Act* in an effort to address health concerns impacting the Diné Community. The Act has funded more than 1,300 community-selected wellness projects across the Navajo Nation, including fitness classes, greenhouses, youth clubs, clean water initiatives, Navajo language, and culture classes and more.



OAKLAND, CA

The city adopted a 1-cent tax per ounce on the same day as its Bay Area neighbors, San Francisco and Albany. Revenues have been invested in new athletic fields, playgrounds for children, water stations, food programs and summer job programs, and upgrading of local infrastructure such as city pools, youth centers and other facilities. Download the shared Oakland profile for more details.



PHILADELPHIA, PA

The city focuses funding in areas lacking childcare options and communities with greater numbers of families with low incomes. In 2017, \$79 million in revenue from Philadelphia’s 1.5-cent per ounce tax funded pre-K seats for 2,700 children, 12 community schools, and launched the rebuild of Philadelphia’s parks, rec centers, playgrounds, and libraries. Download ‘Policy Profile: Philadelphia, PA Sweetened Drink Tax’ for more details.



LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TAXING SUGARY DRINKS CAN HELP IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH OUTCOMES:

- https://www.healthyfoodamerica.org/taxing_sugary_drinks
- <https://www.healthyfoodamerica.org/sugary-drink-tax-equity>
- <https://www.thepraxisproject.org/ssb>
- CA SSB taxes and what it could mean for your community
- How sugar-sweetened beverage tax revenues are being used in the United States

PARTNERS:

- The San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative at UCSD
- Comité Organizador Latino de City Heights (COLCH)
- Poder Popular
- Olivewood Gardens and Learning Center
- The Praxis Project
- American Heart Association—Voices for Healthy Kids
- Center for Science in the Public Interest