



Memorandum in Support

Sugar Sweetened Beverage Tax

The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy supports the proposal in the Executive Budget for an excise tax on syrup for sugar sweetened beverages. This proposal would benefit the health of New Yorkers and provide revenue for health related programs.

There is no getting away from the media stories on the growing epidemic of obesity. Just opening the newspaper or turning on the evening news brings daily stories of the dramatic increase in childhood obesity and the growing costs of obesity related disease. It is clear is that both individuals and society will bear significant financial costs and as well health status if the trend is not reversed.

Studies have shown that the beverages targeted by this measure are linked to weight gain. We also know from New York's success with tobacco taxes that raising prices impacts consumer behavior. If this proposal leads to only a 5% reduction the consumption of sugared beverages, it would help slow weight increases in the population. Highly sugared drinks are also associated with tooth decay so reducing the amount of these beverages consumed by kids has additional health benefits. When coupled with education about diet, nutrition and healthy habits, this measure will encourage people to think more about what they eat.

This proposal is about steering people to make better choices. It is about giving people an incentive to choose other beverages or even cut back on the amount of these sugared products they drink. People will still have choices but they will also think about how they want to spend their money and consume their calories.

The revenue generated from the tax must go to avert further cuts to health programs as proposed in the Executive Budget. A portion of what is collected should also go to expand programs directly impacted by the consumption of highly sugared beverages – obesity and oral health.

For these reasons, SCAA urges the Legislature to pass the tax on sugared syrup, ensure that the money raised is used to avert further cuts to health programs and a portion is used to increase obesity prevention and oral health programs.

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www.scaany.org

Albany

150 State Street, 4th Floor
Albany, New York 12207

voice 518-463-1896

fax 518-463-3364

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