



### **February 16 Beverage Tax Update:**

- **Calls for City Council to Reconsider Beverage Tax**
- **Recap of Border Store News Conference**
- **Ongoing Feedback from Seattle Business, Consumers Underscores Growing Opposition to New Beverage Tax**

Since the Seattle Beverage Tax was implemented on January 1, Seattle residents have been stunned by how much prices of their favorite beverages have increased. Neighborhood business owners are outraged over the burden of the complex tax, the confusion it is causing their customers and employees, the anger expressed by their patrons and the impact it will have on their livelihoods. The fundamental flaws in the tax are confirmed by the impact it is having on businesses and consumers throughout the city.

- **Seattle Businesses Leader Calls on City Council to Reconsider Beverage Tax – Counters Claims that Tax has no economic Impact.** On behalf of the Keep Seattle Livable for All Coalition, Brion LoPriore of LoPriore Brothers Pasta Bar in Pike Place Market sent a letter to the city council calling on them to reassess the beverage tax and explicitly pushing back claims that the tax will not have a negative economic impact. Citing studies from Philadelphia that substantiates the economic impact the tax is having on both the city and its business community there, LoPore implores the City Council to reconsider the “Sugary Drinks Tax” in Seattle. “The evaluation of this tax should be based on facts and evidence on the impact this measure is having and will continue to have on small businesses and the local economy, and not on faulty perceptions that continue to be perpetuated.” A copy of the letter to the City Council is available [here](#).
- **Seattle Businesses Already Feeling the Impact of the Beverage Tax**
  - **January press conference shines light on border stores:** At a January 26<sup>th</sup> news conference in the Roxhill neighborhood of West Seattle, an area near the city border where businesses are especially hit hard by the new beverage tax, business owners and community leaders shared how the Seattle Sweetened Beverage Tax is having an even worse impact on their businesses than many expected. They called on the City Council to turn their focus to the unintended damage the tax is causing to business and employee’s livelihoods. You can find a press release on the “border store” news conference [here](#). You can check out video from the event at <https://www.facebook.com/KeepSeattleLivableForAll/>

- [Seattleites making a run to the border for ... Coke?](#) Following the news conference, Seattle Times columnist Danny Westneat looked at the border effect of the soda tax on local businesses calling out the sign at a Bartell's store in White Center across the city limits that stated, "Get Your Drinks Here. No Sugar Tax".
- **Headlines in the News -- From Seattle and beyond:** There has been considerable media attention over the implementation of the beverage tax. The following is a small sample of headlines and links:
  - [Small Businesses Aren't Too Sweet on New Beverage Tax,](#)
  - [Pizza shop owner says Seattle's soda tax is costing him business,](#)
  - [Seattle soda tax costing businesses money, owners say,](#)
  - [Soda tax: A bad way to try changing habits,](#)
  - [Taxing our soda and interfering with our diets won't always result in slimmer waistlines,](#)
  - [Seattle's Soda Tax Is An Absolute Disaster – And Business Leaders Are Furious...](#)
- **Coalition members up in arms:** Members of the [Keep Seattle Livable for All](#) coalition and the more than 400 stores that have participated in the education campaign are sharing their views and opinions on the complexity and burden this is putting on their business and the shock and surprise that their customers are experiencing. [Voices of the People: The Growing Opposition to the Seattle Beverage Tax](#) shares quotes and pictures from business owners and workers. The following are a few of the quotes from business owners expressing concern that the tax is driving their customers out of the city to buy beverages.
  - "The taxes are already high in Seattle, there is no reason to increase them. It has driven out the lower class and middle class and now they are going to drive out hardworking business owners like myself." - Jasvinder Singn, Daawat Grill and Bar
  - "I believe this tax is rather excessive and it is definitely hurting many of our city's small businesses and the local economy will experience a drop." - Sidharth Sethi, Mad Pizza
  - "My brother and I have worked within this business for over 30 years and this beverage tax has only added to all the other costs that we now have to face. We've had no choice but to raise our prices." - German Arias, El Farol Mexican Restaurant
  - "Let me explain something, I work in my shop every day, and I can't afford to hire other employees. Seattle has plenty of owners in the same situation as me, and we simply just do not have time to head down to city hall to give them a piece of our mind. We are busy trying to make a living. If I could make it down there I would tell them to repeal this ridiculous beverage tax, it's tough enough to do business in Seattle as it is." - Thiraphan Suttabusya of Ti22 Restaurant
- **Future updates:** Look for more news/events in the coming days/weeks.

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