



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MAY 8, 2017

ANTI-BEVERAGE TAX COALITION DELIVERED MORE THAN 18,000 PETITIONS TO CITY COUNCILMEMBERS

Contact: Anthony Campisi
(215) 735-6760
Anthony@Ceislermedia.com

PHILADELPHIA — A day before Philadelphia City Council is to hold a key budget hearing, members of the Ax the Philly Bev Tax Coalition hand-delivered boxes filled with more than 18,000 letters and petitions to City Hall today calling on City Council officials to put an end to Philadelphia’s regressive beverage tax.

The petitions were signed by a broad-based coalition of local businesses and Philadelphia families who oppose the tax because it is costing jobs, hurting local businesses and raising prices for working families.

“This tax has been particularly hard on stores like ours, which operate in neighborhoods that are very close to the suburbs,” said Sean McMenemy, President of McMenemy Family ShopRites, which owns two supermarkets in the Far Northeast. “Since the tax was put into effect, our customers have started shopping outside the city. We hope these petitions show City Council that Philadelphia families are suffering.”

The tax is applied to more than 3,000 products — including teas, sports drinks, flavored waters and some milk substitutes — and has drastically increased prices for working families since going into effect in January.

These price hikes have caused sales in neighborhood supermarkets and corner stores to plummet as families flee to the suburbs to do their shopping.

Neighborhood supermarkets and corner stores have been forced to reduce hours for hundreds of union employees and eliminate jobs that often provide a pathway to the middle class. In addition, local Philadelphia bottlers have been forced to cut more than 150 union positions through layoffs, attrition and restructuring.

“Philadelphia’s beverage tax is hurting the supermarkets and groceries that are the economic engine of Philadelphia’s neighborhoods,” said Dave McCorkle, President and CEO of the Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association, which is one of the leaders of the anti-tax coalition. “Our members are working hard to provide hundreds of jobs to Philadelphia working families and to expand grocery access into

food deserts. This onerous tax strikes at the very heart of our business and is hurting Philadelphia’s struggling neighborhoods the most.”

The Ax the Philly Bev Tax Coalition delivered these petitions a day before City Council takes public testimony for next year’s budget and only days after voters in Santa Fe, N.M., rejected a similar tax by a decisive margin. Recent polling shows that nearly 60 percent of Philadelphia voters oppose the city’s beverage tax.

City Council is concluding its budget hearings shortly after Philadelphia’s April tax collections came in nearly 10 percent under projections — raising questions about the long-term sustainability of the beverage tax as a revenue source.

“The beverage tax has nearly doubled the price of a bag of syrup,” said Andy Pincus, who owns Carbonator Rental Service, a Southwest Philadelphia company that sells beverage syrup and carbon dioxide and rents beverage equipment to area restaurants. “My sales in the city have plummeted in the last five months, and I’m afraid I may have to lay off some of my employees. Enough is enough. It’s time for City Council to take action and get rid of this job-destroying tax.”

The Ax the Bev Tax Coalition is a partnership between Philadelphia families and businesses negatively impacted by the city’s new regressive beverage tax. For more information visit www.axthebevtax.com.

###

Following are pictures of the petition delivery to City Council offices:





