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Cook County Small Businesses and Residents Launch *Can the Tax* Campaign to Repeal Beverage Tax

(CHICAGO - May 18, 2017) - Cook County businesses and residents have launched *Can the Tax*, a new countywide campaign calling for the repeal of Cook County's penny-per-ounce beverage tax scheduled to take effect on July 1, 2017.

If the tax goes into effect, Cook County residents will find themselves paying higher prices for more than 1,000 everyday beverages, including juice and sports drinks, flavored waters, pop, iced tea - and even beverages with no calories and no sugar.

"The Cook County beverage tax is a massive new tax on more than 1,000 products that will dramatically increase prices, cause jobs to be lost and hurt local restaurants and shops," said **Sam Toia, president of the Illinois Restaurant Association**. "Cook County Board members have an opportunity to repeal the tax - and they should - before thousands of jobs in Cook County are put at risk from the new tax."

Toia was joined at a news conference today at Chicago's iconic Manny's Deli by representatives of the Illinois Retail Merchants Association, Teamsters Local 727 and more than a dozen other organizations and local businesses.

The impact of Cook County's beverage tax could be devastating, including an estimated 6,300 lost jobs, \$321 million in lost wages and \$1.3 billion in lost economic activity.

"Enough is enough. Cook County working families, consumers and businesses cannot afford this beverage tax," said **John Coli, Jr., president of Teamsters Local 727**.

Under the new tax, Cook County consumers will be paying significantly more when buying some of the most commonly purchased beverages.

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Launch Can the Tax Campaign to Repeal Beverage Tax (cont.)

For example:

Item	Original Price*	New Cook County Beverage Tax	New Cost*	Increase due to Beverage Tax rate*
2-liter	\$0.99	\$0.67	\$1.66	67%
Gallon (juice, iced tea, etc.)	\$2.99	\$1.28	\$4.27	43%
Case of cans	\$7.99	\$2.88	\$10.87	36%
12-pack	\$4.99	\$1.44	\$6.43	29%

**Does not include the 3% City of Chicago beverage tax or 10.25% State and Cook County sales tax*

Coalition members pointed to the economic impact a similar beverage tax has had in Philadelphia since going into effect on January 1, 2017. In just four short months, Philadelphia businesses, consumers and workers have experienced economic losses far greater than originally predicted, including:

- **Beverage sales plummeted as much as 50 percent** at some local groceries and local beverage distributors reported up to a **45 percent decline in sales**, while **sales increased at retail outlets just outside Philadelphia** city lines, though not enough to offset the decline in sales within the city. ([Bloomberg Markets, 2/17/17](#))
- The **equivalent of more than 400 jobs have been lost** through layoffs and cutbacks in hours at local retailers, restaurants and manufacturers ([Bloomberg Markets, 2/17/17](#); [Philly.com, 3/1/17](#); [Philly.com, 4/28/17](#))
- The current **revenue trajectory will not meet the city’s projected totals**. (News release, Ax the Philly Bev Tax Coalition, 5/3/17)

“In 30 years of business, there’s never been a circumstance in which we’ve ever had a sales decline of any significant amount,” said **Jeff Brown, chief executive officer of Brown’s Super Stores in Philadelphia** during an interview with [Bloomberg Markets](#) in February. Brown’s Super Stores operates 12 ShopRites and Fresh Grocer supermarkets. Brown continued, “I would describe the impact as nothing less than devastating.”

“Philadelphia is the canary in the coalmine,” said **Rob Karr, executive vice president of the Illinois Retail Merchants Association**. “We know the devastating effects this tax will have in Cook County if we don’t can the tax. We can’t risk it.”

Between now and July 1, the *Can the Tax* Coalition will work to inform and educate Cook County residents and businesses about the negative impact the beverage tax could have if it goes into effect and urge Cook County Board members to repeal the tax.

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Launch Can the Tax Campaign to Repeal Beverage Tax (cont.)

Current *Can the Tax* members:

- Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce
- Cook County Farm Bureau
- Illinois Association of Blind Merchants
- Illinois Association of Convenience Stores
- Illinois Beverage Association
- Illinois Chamber of Commerce
- Illinois Chapter - National Association of Theatre Owners
- Illinois Committee on Blind Vendors
- Illinois Farm Bureau
- Illinois Food Retailers Association
- Illinois Licensed Beverage Association
- Illinois Manufacturers' Association
- Illinois Petroleum Marketers Association
- Illinois Restaurant Association
- Illinois Retail Merchants Association
- Juice Products Association
- Teamsters Local 727

To learn more, visit StopTheCookCountyTax.com.

About the *Can the Tax* Campaign and Coalition

The *Can the Tax* coalition is an initiative of more than a dozen organizations in Cook County uniting to educate Cook County consumers, businesses and news media about the negative impact of the Cook County beverage tax on our local consumers and businesses. The Coalition will urge the Board of Cook County Commissioners to repeal the beverage tax to ensure Cook County residents have access to affordable consumer products and avoid the lost jobs and harm the tax will cause working families. Campaign activities are paid for by the American Beverage Association, a member of the *Can the Tax* campaign and coalition. To learn more, visit StopTheCookCountyTax.com.

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