



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -- Sept. 25, 2018

Contact: Felicia Heaton, 503-998-5047, feliciaheaton@gmail.com

Hispanic Organizations Add to Growing List of I-1634 Supporters, Standing Up for Tax Fairness and Affordability

Yakima, WA – Citing the importance of keeping groceries affordable and preventing further unfair taxation, several Hispanic chambers of commerce today announced they have joined the more than 1,400 individuals, groups and organizations that are supporting Initiative 1634 and saying Yes! To Affordable Groceries. The Tri-Cities Hispanic Chamber, the Latino Food Industry Association, and the Central Washington Hispanic Chamber have officially endorsed the November 2018 ballot measure, which prohibits any new, local taxes on groceries. They join the King County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Ethnic Chambers of Commerce Coalition, which announced their support for I-1634 on Aug. 29.

While the Washington state government doesn't currently collect taxes on food and beverages, there is a loophole in the law that allows local governments to impose taxes on groceries, which hit working families the hardest. The Seattle City Council was able to exploit this loophole in crafting a tax on beverages in 2017. The Office of the Attorney General affirmed that this loophole exists and could be used by other local governments to target food and beverages.

I-1634 takes a proactive step to close this loophole and prevent any new taxes on food, beverages and their ingredients in Washington. It does not reverse or impact the Seattle tax nor any revenue streams that have already been passed by local governments.

"Many of our members run community-based stores, shops and restaurants and rely on consistent and fair taxes that do not target small businesses and hard-working families. Taxes on groceries would put an added burden on businesses, put jobs and employee hours at risk and put added strain on family budgets, many who are living from paycheck to paycheck. I-1634 is our opportunity to take a stand and let our elected officials know that food and beverages should be off the table when it comes to taxes," said Nikki Torres of the Tri-Cities Hispanic Chamber.

Local and statewide organizations are supporting this initiative and continue to add their names to the growing and diverse Yes! To Affordable Groceries coalition. Initiative 1634 gives voters an opportunity to take a stand to bring fairness to our tax structure, to protect jobs and neighborhood businesses, and to prevent excessive taxation on what we eat and drink every day.

"LFIA sees local governments faced with budget challenges that are now considering revenue sources we wouldn't have thought possible a few years back. There's nothing to stop other cities and towns

from doing the same thing with any grocery items. These types of taxes hurt the very people they are intended to help, resulting in fewer jobs, falling sales at neighborhood businesses, and higher prices for working families,” said Ruben Smith of the Latino Food Industry Association (LFIA).

“Agriculture is critical to our state’s economy and depends on the thousands of farmers and laborers who put in the hours of hard work to ensure that farm to table quality is delivered to their customers each and every day. Taxes on food and beverages threaten the small margins for the farmers, create uncertainty in the supply chain and potentially impact employees, small businesses and customers who rely on a healthy and thriving agriculture sector,” said Haddia Abbas Nazer of the Central Washington Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Since the coalition was founded in Spring 2018 with initial support from the Washington Farm Bureau, the Washington Food Industry Association, the Joint Council of Teamsters No. 28, and the Korean American Grocers Association, the coalition has been boosted by major statewide partners from labor, agriculture, and associations representing businesses of all sizes. These organizations include the Washington Retail Association, Washington Hospitality Association, Washington State Tree Fruit Association, and the Seattle Building Trades. A full list of coalition members is available [here](#).

###

Paid for by Yes! to Affordable Groceries, supported by the Joint Council of Teamsters No. 28, Washington Farm Bureau, Washington Food Industry Association, and Korean-American Grocer’s Association of Washington, and sponsored by the American Beverage Association. Top 5 contributors: Washington Food Industry Association; The Coca-Cola Company; PepsiCo, Inc.; Keurig Dr Pepper and Red Bull North America. PO Box 50705, Bellevue, Washington, 98015.