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## **Yes! To Affordable Groceries Act Certified for November Ballot**

*Secretary of State Certifies Initiative 1634; Voters Now Have Chance to Prohibit New Local Taxes on Groceries*

**Olympia, WA** – The Yes! to Affordable Groceries coalition today announced that the Washington Secretary of State has formally certified Initiative 1634 for the November 2018 ballot, giving voters the opportunity to make their voices heard on keeping groceries affordable. More than 1,000 Washington residents have joined small businesses, farm bureaus, labor organizations, and Chambers of Commerce to support I-1634 to protect our state from taxes on food and beverages.

A total of 381,479 signatures were submitted in support of I-1634, the Yes! To Affordable Groceries Act, on July 6. The Secretary of State's office examined a random sample of the signatures and found a validity rate of 82%, indicating that the initiative would meet the constitutional requirements to make the November ballot. Initiatives need at least 259,622 signatures to make the ballot.

"Initiative 1634 has generated such a strong and diverse base of support because voters are legitimately concerned with the rising cost of living and a regressive tax structure that are hitting families and independent community businesses the hardest," said Jeff Philipps, coalition member and President of Rosauers Supermarkets.

While the Washington state government doesn't currently collect taxes on food and beverages, there is a loophole in the law that lets local governments impose taxes on groceries. Grocery taxes hit working families the hardest and cost the state jobs in a vital part of our economy. The Seattle City Council exploited this loophole in 2017 to pass a tax on beverages. The tax raised beverage prices astronomically, but prices on other products also went up as business owners worked to implement the complicated policy. There's nothing to stop other cities and towns from doing the same thing with any grocery items.

I-1634 will close this loophole for any future new taxes on food and beverages. It does not reverse any taxes or revenue streams that currently exist.

"We see local governments faced with budget challenges that are now considering revenue sources we wouldn't have thought possible a few years back. For family farms and our farming community, taxes will undoubtedly take a toll on Agricultural viability and therefore cost local jobs and hurt farmers and ranchers, like me, and outability to do business. There needs to be a better way to fund our priorities - we need to draw a line to keep groceries affordable and free of

new taxes,” said April Clayton, coalition member and Vice President of Chelan/Douglas County Farm Bureau.

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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](#)