



OVER 150 SEATTLE SMALL BUSINESSES FORM NEW COALITION AGAINST BEVERAGE TAX

Make Seattle Livable for All Group to Protest Unfair Tax that Would Harm Businesses, Jobs and Seattle Consumers.

April 4, 2017 – SEATTLE – Today, over 150 small business owners in Seattle launched a coalition against a beverage tax proposed by Mayor Ed Murray that will hit customers hard and cause significant sales losses at local stores.

Make Seattle Livable for All will ask Seattle residents to consider how this tax will make prices skyrocket on hundreds of everyday beverages and negatively affect the livelihoods of thousands of people. Store incomes would drop as people shop outside the city to avoid the tax, costing people their jobs or hourly wages. Some local stores may even be forced to close their doors permanently.

The *Make Seattle Livable for All* coalition asked Mayor Murray and the Seattle City Council in a letter to consider the wisdom of a regressive tax that places a much larger share of the tax burden on the people least capable of paying it in Seattle.

A tax of \$.02 per ounce doesn't sound like a lot, but it adds up. Prices would as much as double on beverages like bottled coffees, soda, teas and sports drinks. The amount of the tax on some of these beverages would be more than price itself.

Unfortunately, Mayor Murray has made almost no effort to look at the concerns of Seattle's small business community and the negative impacts on small stores and customers that will all suffer under his proposed tax.

Jones Soda CEO Jennifer Cue said the tax would make things much harder on Seattle's businesspeople and residents who are already burdened by the city's rising cost of living. "As a local Seattle employer and innovator, I see this tax as a misguided public policy that is not addressing the health issue while hurting local businesses. This is bad public policy for Seattle residents, who already face among the highest sales tax burdens in the country.

Low-income families will be hit hardest. A 99-cent two-liter bottle would cost \$2.35 after the tax of \$1.36 is added. People living on stretched budgets will be faced with much higher prices at their neighborhood grocery stores, restaurants, cafes and mini-marts. Already burdened by Seattle's rising living expenses, working-class families simply can't afford such an arbitrary tax increase.

"My customers come from working families who can barely afford to live in Seattle and this tax would have a devastating impact on them. This is a clear example of government overreach and not about health, especially since they are considering including sugar-free drinks and no other snacks in this tax," said Temesghew Kahsay, owner of Providence Market in Seattle's Central District.

Seattle's small businesses employ 1.5 million people, many of whom depend on these businesses for their living. These local businesses are already trying to stay afloat under growing tax burdens, skyrocketing real estate costs and a forced higher minimum wage.

Many members of Seattle's minority and immigrant communities have created livings for themselves, their families and their neighbors in neighborhood stores and restaurants. Beverage sales are a significant source of income for these businesses. That is why many members of Seattle's diverse city have joined our coalition including the Korean Grocers Association.

The members of the *Make Seattle Livable for All* coalition ask Seattle residents to join in keeping Seattle livable for everyone by opposing this tax, which will have a detrimental impact on neighborhood economies and disrupt Seattle's unique, welcoming culture that has helped so many people thrive here.

The coalition has launched a website (www.keepseattlelivableforall.com) where people can go to learn more about this tax and take action to help by contacting Mayor Murray and the city council and say NO to taxing people out of Seattle.

###

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Jim Cullinan or Jack Evans

[206/724-4588](tel:2067244588)

[425/753-95763](tel:42575395763)