



This is the first in a series of updates to keep you informed of developments related to the effort to keep groceries affordable in the state of Washington through a ballot initiative that would prohibit new local taxes on groceries.

In this update, we cover:

- *The Ballot Committee Filing*
- *A Seattle Beverage Tax Update*
- *Contact information*

Ballot Committee Filing:

- **Formation:** On Monday, February 26, the coalition Yes! To Affordable Groceries registered a ballot committee with Washington’s Public Disclosure Commission ([link to filing](#)). This is the first step in a process to move forward a statewide ballot measure that will keep groceries affordable and free of new local taxes.
- **About the Coalition:** Yes! To Affordable Groceries is a group of citizens, farmers, businesses and community organizations actively opposing new taxes on everyday grocery items, such as meats, dairy and beverages. We’re taking 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.
- **Support:** The ballot committee is supported by the Korean American Grocer’s Association, Washington Food Industry Association, Washington Farm Bureau and Joint Council of Teamsters No. 28 and is sponsored by the American Beverage Association.
- **Statement on Formation of the Coalition:** A statement was issued by the coalition on the ballot committee filing

“...with a coalition of taxpayers, grocers, farmers and union members, the Yes! To Affordable Groceries Committee will seek to prevent local government from enacting new taxes on groceries. The pending ballot measure will give working families more voice and protection on the affordability of their groceries and their communities overall.”

The full statement can be found [here](#).

In the News:

- [Beverage industry, allies start campaign to stop Seattle's soda tax from spreading](#), **Seattle Times, February 28**. Dan Beekman's piece provides an overview of the ballot committee filing and highlights the breadth of the coalition, the threat of measures like the beverage tax going beyond Seattle and beyond just beverages and the harm these measures inflict on small businesses.

Growing Opposition to the Seattle Beverage Tax: Part of the impetus of this coalition and ensuing campaign comes from concerns raised by local measures like the Seattle Beverage tax which was enacted this new year. [Voices of the People: The Growing Opposition to the Seattle Beverage Tax](#) shares quotes and pictures from business owners and workers who are being impacted by this tax. The following are a few of the quotes from business owners expressing concern that the tax is driving their customers out of the city to buy beverages.

- "This tax is bad for businesses. We are already taxed enough and our customers are going to be hit the hardest. Why should those who have the least be forced to pay more for a soda?" - Stevie Allen of Emerald City Fish and Chips
- "I believe that this tax is just another way to drive out small business owners. I have to pay twice as much for my syrups, but I'm not going to hike my prices in my cafe. I don't think it's fair to charge someone six or seven bucks for a coffee. I have to pay the price and it's unfair." - James Ly of Caffe Zingaro
- "I really want the Seattle City Council to understand something, the small stores and restaurants in Seattle are what make the city the kind of place that everyone wants to live. We ought to be protecting these businesses and protecting our communities instead of squeezing them with silly things like this beverage tax." - David Fu of Snappy Dragon
- "I just want to say that taxes on small businesses are too high. This beverage tax makes it so expensive that I have to raise my prices and it's causing customers to complain. Lynnwood and Shoreline make things much easier for businesses, Seattle should take note." - Mario Hernandez of Anita's Mexican Food
- "I believe that this tax is a direct threat to small locally owned businesses and I hope that everyone can divulge into the statistics of this so they can understand how regressive it is." - Mike Danford of Pike Grocery

Future updates: The next step in this process is filing proposed language with the Secretary of State's office which will take place this week. We will provide a communication on this news and keep you apprised of future developments. For additional information, please visit our [website](#).

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