



January 16: Beverage Tax Update: Seattle Citizens, Business Owners Express Outrage over New Tax

Since the Seattle Beverage Tax was implemented on January 1, the response has been overwhelmingly negative. Seattle residents have been stunned by how much prices of their favorite beverages have increased. Neighborhood business owners are outraged over the burden of the complex tax, the confusion it is causing their customers and employees, the anger expressed by their patrons and the impact it will have on their livelihoods. This outrage is seen in neighborhoods throughout the city and expressed through dramatic spikes in social media reaction and news coverage inside and outside the Emerald City.

- **Costco Signage Drives Social Media:** Costco's decision to inform their customers of the breakdown of the price increase was the most highlighted example of signage in Seattle retail and neighborhood stores that drove a spike in social media this past week. Local media's coverage of the tax reaffirmed statements about the tax hurting local businesses, consumers, and the community. Social media traffic on the beverage tax increased 525% from the previous week.
- **No Footlong Deal for Seattle:** [A Seattle Subway can't sell \\$5 footlongs because of big government – and posted a sign to let customers know.](#) It's not just retail chains and convenience stores that are feeling the impact. Restaurants and quick service food stores like Subway need to reassess offering nationally advertised values and bargains offered to customers throughout the country but not in Seattle because of the beverage tax.
- **Headlines in the News -- From Seattle and beyond:** There has been considerable media attention over the implementation of the beverage tax. The following is a small sample of headlines and links:
 - [Sticker shock over Seattle's new sugary drink tax](#)
 - [After Seattle soda tax, Costco says case of Gatorade costs \\$26.33 instead of \\$15.99.](#)
 - [Seattle's "Sweetened Beverage Tax" causes prices to skyrocket](#)
 - [Promoting health at a Hefty Price: Seattle Soda Tax Starts January 1.](#)
 - [Seattle attempts to impose morality with ridiculously high taxes on sugary drinks](#)
 - [That New Soda Tax In Seattle Is Working Out About As Well As Chicago's](#)
 - [Costco puts INSANE Seattle soda tax on blast](#)
 - [Seattle residents jolted by new sugar tax.](#)

- [It's the milk, not the sugar: Fancy lattes get a break on Seattle's new sweetened beverage tax.](#)
- **Overwhelming Opposition to Statewide Tax:** Over the weekend, [KIRO news put up a poll on their Facebook Site](#) asking their followers "Should Seattle's Soda Tax be applied across Washington State?" To date, the poll has generated over 2,000 comments, the vast majority of those in opposition to a statewide tax. This is one of the most responded posts on their FB page, demonstrating the passionate opposition to such taxes.
- **Coalition members up in arms:** Members of the [Keep Seattle Livable for All](#) coalition and the more than 400 stores that have participated in the education campaign are sharing their views and opinions on the complexity and burden this is putting on their business and the shock and surprise that their customers are experiencing. 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 their beverages.
 - "Customers are leaving un-purchased items at the counter once they learn of the increased price caused by the beverage tax." -- Dharm Skinda, owner of the Shell Station at [620 Denny Way](#)
 - "I have worked in my store for over 12 years; this beverage tax will be a burden for my business as soon as we sell out of our drinks we bought before the tax passed." – Yohannes Zewaldi, Owner, Morning Side Grocery
 - "I operate this store with my family and over the past week we have taken notice of business dropping due to much cheaper options nearby. It is no doubt an unfair tax on smaller businesses such as mine." – Gezat Tesfaye, Owner, Hamadi Market
- **Future updates:** We will be back in touch with more news and updates in the days and weeks to come.

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