

**A new unfair tax being considered by the Cook County Board of Commissioners will burden Cook County families and businesses**

Cook County families already pay higher than average taxes. In the last year alone, many Cook County families and businesses have endured massive property taxes, have seen their sales tax rise to the highest in the nation and have been hit with new garbage and sewer tax proposals.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and the Cook County Board of Commissioners are now considering a tax on beverages, such as sports drinks, juices, and teas – even low- and no-calorie beverages. Such a tax will destroy jobs, raise grocery bills and disproportionately hurt middle and low-income Cook County families.

The County says it needs new revenue to get back on a fiscally sustainable path. But it has chosen a regressive tax – one that burdens low-income and middle-class families the most – as the cornerstone of its efforts. The County continues to put the strain of its budget shortfalls on working families and small businesses. The beverage tax won't be a permanent solution to the county's fiscal challenges. More taxes will come if the county doesn't get its fiscal house in order.

If approved, the penny per ounce tax would cause a significant jump in prices. The price of a 2-liter bottle of soda would be taxed at 68 cents – an increase of up to 68% in total price.

The beverage industry provides more than 9,475 high-paying jobs, \$819.5 million in wages and \$1.5 billion in state and federal taxes every year. That's a direct economic impact of \$6.2 billion. In addition, more than 90,000 jobs in restaurants, grocery stores, convenience stores and movie theaters rely on the industry. President Preckwinkle's proposed tax would cost jobs and lower incomes at a time when people are struggling in an uncertain economy.

We want to protect hard-working Cook County residents who rely on the non-alcoholic beverage industry for their paychecks.

We also agree obesity is a complex, national issue that requires us to re-examine old practices and find new solutions. All of us – policymakers, parents, educators, industry and community leaders – have a responsibility to do our part to help teach our children how to live a balanced lifestyle.

Instead of advocating for a measure that will raise grocery prices on families and jeopardize local business, we should work to provide consumers with information on how to best maintain a balanced diet and give them the choices in foods and beverages to do so.

The Cook County Against Beverage Taxes Coalition is standing up for Cook County families and businesses by opposing this new discriminatory tax. When will Cook County commissioners do the same?

We encourage small businesses, community organizations and residents to attend the public budget hearings hosted by the Cook County Board and [contact their commissioners](#). It's your chance to voice your opposition to another tax on working families.

Submitted on behalf of the Cook County Against Beverage Taxes Coalition

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