

October 8, 2025



To: San Francisco Commission Streamlining Task Force
From: Abby Cabrera, MPH | Sugary Drinks Distributor Tax Advisory Committee (SDDTAC)
Seat 4 (Research/Medical Institution) since 2021 and Co-Chair
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Urgent Request to Keep the Sugary Drinks Distributor Tax Advisory Committee

Dear Commission Streamlining Task Force Members,

I am writing in response to your recommendation to eliminate the Sugary Drinks Distributor Tax Advisory Committee and **strongly urge you to reconsider keeping it as is.**

The San Francisco SDDTAC is a nationally recognized, **legislatively established body** created through the **will of San Francisco voters** to ensure that revenues from the Sugary Drinks Distributor Tax (SDDT) are recommended to be **allocated transparently, equitably, and effectively** to advance health equity. The Committee consists of sixteen appointed members, including subject matter experts, community and health equity representatives, and City department staff—each serving a defined role to uphold public and community accountability and voter intent.

San Francisco’s implementation of the SDDT and the SDDTAC’s transparent, data-driven, and community-informed budget recommendations have made it a model for other jurisdictions across the country. The SDDTAC’s recommendations to the Mayor and Board of Supervisors directly support local efforts to reduce sugary drink consumption, expand access to clean drinking water, improve oral health, and promote healthy eating and active living—all priorities central to the City’s public health mission.

Response to Evaluation Criteria

Category	Task Force Assessment	Clarification on SDDTAC
4. Overlap with other bodies	Yes (Health Commission, Food Security Task Force)	The SDDTAC’s scope extends far beyond food access and the charge of the Food Security Task Force (FSTF) . It addresses chronic disease prevention, oral health, physical activity, school-based initiatives rooted in wellness, and more.

Category	Task Force Assessment	Clarification on SDDTAC
5. Breadth of Focus	Yes, (funding) Sugary Drinks Distributor Tax	While the SDDTAC makes recommendations on a specific funding source, its funded programs reach and impact populations most targeted by the beverage industry – communities that experience the highest burden and suffer disproportionate rates of overconsumption of sugary drinks and other diet-related chronic disease.
5. Breadth of Focus – could it be adequately represented by some other body or city dept?	Yes, consider combining or eliminating	No. The SDDTAC is the only cross-sector, voter-mandated advisory body dedicated to reducing sugary drink consumption and advancing health equity . Its composition – balancing community health equity representatives, subject matter experts, and City agencies– was deliberately designed and voter approved to ensure diverse and representative voices. Eliminating or merging it would directly contradict the intent of the legislation and will of San Francisco voters and halt the almost 10 years of hard work the SDDTAC has committed to all San Franciscans.

Clarification on Elimination Rationale

CSTF Rationale to Eliminate SDDTAC	Facts Pertaining to the SDDTAC
Minimal public engagement “According to a review of available information and relevant department input, does this body bring in outside expertise that would otherwise be missing from the City’s work on the body’s target topic area? This means that neither City staff nor other active	Yes , the SDDTAC brings in outside expertise otherwise missing from the City’s work. By its charge and composition, the SDDTAC represents the voice of the community with strong public engagement. Eight (50%) of the SDDTAC’s members are appointed by the Board of Supervisors specifically to represent key communities. Public input is embedded throughout the process—not

CSTF Rationale to Eliminate SDDTAC	Facts Pertaining to the SDDTAC
forms of public engagement bring in this outside expertise.”	<p>only through public comment but via continuous community feedback loops that inform funding recommendations.</p> <p>I welcome you to review the last four annual evaluation reports to learn and read about the multitude of ways the SDDT positively impacts SF communities and the SDDTAC engages with the public since 2018.</p>
Narrow emphasis on the consumption of sugary drinks by youth (youth & parent representative)	<p>The SDDTAC’s mandate is health equity for all, guided by data and informed by community. While youth are heavily targeted by beverage marketing, the SDDTAC’s work prioritizes five populations: low-income Black/African American, Latinx, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native communities.</p>
Subsuming SDDTAC responsibilities under the Food Security Task Force (FSTF)	<p>The SDDTAC was created by and legislatively voted in by the San Francisco voters. The FSTF is scheduled to sunset in 2026 and lacks expertise in relevant subject matter expertise in oral health, medical and research institution leaders, youth, SFUSD parent, health equity stakeholders, chronic disease prevention, and a seat focused on children 0 to 5 years old. Furthermore, the SDDTAC’s creation by voter-approved ordinance precludes its dissolution or absorption without legislative action.</p>

SDDTAC Achievements and Accomplishments

- Serves as a national model for soda tax advisory bodies
- Facilitates cross-sector collaboration across local community-based organizations, research/medical institutions, City departments, and the public.

- Since 2018, the SDDTAC has produced annual evaluation reports and funding recommendations to the Mayor and Board of Supervisors grounded in data and evidence and community priorities as legislatively charged.
 - Provides transparent and continuous community engagement through public comment, outreach, and deliberate sessions
 - Provides budget recommendations that support the overall decrease in the consumption of sugary drinks through funded initiatives that have directly contributed to:
 - Emergency food access
 - Healthy retail with local business owners
 - Nutrition education
 - Oral health screenings and sealants for children
 - Workforce development and job training
 - Community health worker cohorts working with priority populations most targeted by the beverage industry
 - REFRESH kitchens for SFUSD meals with fresh and mostly local ingredients
 - Water access and education at schools and public parks/sites
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The **SDDTAC** was **intentionally created and approved by voters** to represent community voices and ensure accountability in the use of the SDDT. To dismantle or absorb it into another body would **erode public trust, undermine voter intent, and weaken San Francisco's leadership in public health innovation.**

The SDDTAC is a **bridge for underrepresented communities**, embedding bi-directional feedback between residents and policymakers. Each member carries the weight of the communities they represent. Its elimination would not “streamline” government—it would **silence critical community oversight and diminish transparency.**

We **strongly urge the Commission Streamlining Task Force to keep the SDDTAC in full and honor the will of San Francisco voters** by protecting this advisory committee in its unique role, broad impact, and community-centered approach are vital to advancing health equity and public health in San Francisco. The SDDTAC's work embodies transparency, equity, and the City's longstanding commitment to community-driven health policy.

Respectfully,



Abby Cabrera, MPH