

October 9, 2025

Dear Commission Streamlining Task Force Members,
commissionstreamlining@sfgov.org

I write as an individual to **strongly urge you to preserve the Sugary Drinks Distributor Tax Advisory Committee (SDDTAC)**.

I work at the University of California Nutrition Policy Institute, where a focus of my work is healthy beverages, and specifically policies and programs to reduce consumption of sugary drinks and to enable consumption of water, preferably tap water, in their place. Thus, I am current on the peer-reviewed evidence base on sugary drinks and SSB excise taxes, including the importance of how recommendations and decisions are made about the revenues.

I reside in Berkeley, where our own sugary drink tax has been very successful. Campaigning in neighborhoods for the renewal of our tax in autumn 2024, I observed how the community's knowledge and experience of the programs the Berkeley revenues help fund was key to overwhelming citizen support for the ballot measure, Measure Z. This shows the importance of using SSB tax revenues for specific, known community needs, as determined by a community advisory board, in our case, our Berkeley Sugar Sweetened Beverage Product Panel of Experts Commission.

Similarly, a major factor in San Francisco communities' support for the tax during the 2016 election was the idea that a group of San Francisco's citizens would form the SDDTAC to distribute proceeds of the tax in ways that would serve the health needs of their communities.

Peer-reviewed studies in the scientific literature show that the "cash register" effect of soda taxes is a small part of why they work. Equally important is the use of tax proceeds to meet prevention goals that serve the community, such as tap water promotion, school-based nutrition reforms, and community education. It is the SDDTAC that has the interest and the expertise to recommend SSB excise tax revenues in SF for such projects as,

- Economic /workforce development: culinary job training, a summer internship for high school students to do garden and environmental education
- Access to healthy food: via Market Match and Vouchers for Veggies
- Dental screenings and sealants for youth

In addition, SDDTAC has done a marvelous job of evaluating the impacts of these programs (https://www.sf.gov/sites/default/files/2024-03/22-23_SDDT_EvalReport_Final_Revised.pdf)

The recommendation to eliminate the SDDTAC would undermine public trust and voter confidence in the intent of the legislation approved by San Franciscans. The SDDTAC plays a vital role in ensuring accountability and in elevating the voices of communities most impacted by health inequities. It plays a vital role in fulfilling the original goals of the soda tax: to close the gap in chronic disease disparities citywide.

I urge the Task Force to honor the will of the voters and keep the SDDTAC as an advisory body of transparency, equity, and community engagement in San Francisco's public health efforts.

Sincerely,

Christina Hecht, PhD

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Christina Hecht.