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Dear San Francisco Commission Streamlining Task Force:

As a concerned health care professional (having practiced pediatric dentistry in Berkeley for almost 40 years) I am writing to you to express my strong opposition to merging the San Francisco Sugary Drinks Distributor Tax Advisory Commission (SDDTAC) with the Food Security Task Force, or with any other commission.

It has been my privilege to serve on the City of Berkeley's Sugar Sweetened Beverage Product Panel of Experts (SBBPPE) which came into existence in 2015 after Berkeley passed the first sugar-sweetened beverage tax in the nation. The Commission, as mandated by the voters, has been committed to ensuring that the tax revenues are utilized to reduce health disparities caused by sugared beverage consumption. This singular focus has consistently resulted in grants to organizations which have effected positive changes in the health of the most impacted communities.

Likewise the San Francisco SDDTAC, with the deep expertise of its members in public health, nutrition, disease prevention strategies, medicine and dentistry, has been committed to making grant recommendations which reduce the health disparities for which sugar-sweetened beverage consumption is responsible. The voters who approved the tax on sugary beverages in both San Francisco and Berkeley deserve to have their commissions fully dedicated to combating diabetes, obesity, dental caries and other adverse health effects of sugary drink over-consumption. That singular focus will be lost if the SDDTAC is merged into the Health Security Task Force.

Lastly, and very importantly, our two cities serve as ground-breaking models for other cities throughout the country who are considering similar taxes. Please do not diminish future beneficial public health outcomes by diluting the influence of your sugar tax advisory commission. Keep the SDDTAC intact as the very effective separate entity it has been. This will ensure that San Francisco remains a shining example of a soda tax that makes a significant difference in the health of the people it serves!

Thank you very much for your time and serious consideration.

Sincerely,

Vivian F. Lopez, DDS

