

2026 Berkeley Sugar Sweetened Beverage Distributor Tax

The Coalition for Healthy Children is sponsoring an improved sugary drink tax for the Nov 2026 ballot:

- This **continues to be a tax on Big Soda** and distributors - NOT consumers.
- **The 2026 tax is a Special Designated Tax** that will legally dedicate revenues to *specific purposes* (NOT the City's General Fund) - and will ensure that 42.5% of the revenues go to BUSD, 42.5% to community grants and cap the City administration at 15% of revenues.
- **The 2026 tax will increase the rate** from the current 1 cent to 2 cents per ounce -- bringing in an estimated \$2 million per year for critical school garden and health programming.
- The 2 cent tax will **expand the health equity grant programs** that support healthy eating (including BUSD gardens), promote water and counter beverage industry marketing, with a focus on priority groups: youth, African Americans, Latinos and low-income communities.

Why are we doing this now?

- Big Soda keeps marketing, raising prices and **PROFITING at the expense of OUR health**
- **Our work to fight for healthy communities continues!** In the face of federal attacks on our communities and funding cuts, we can do something local.
- Declining revenues, cuts in BUSD's budget and an increase in the City's overhead have **reduced funds that support BUSD garden programs and vital community prevention programs**. Doubling the rate of the tax would **double the investments** in Berkeley's garden and public health programs.
- In 2024, 80% of voters supported the tax's reauthorization – it did not lose a single precinct! **We believe Berkeley voters will support this augmented tax to strengthen its impact.**



WE NEED YOUR HELP!



We need to collect 5,000 signatures from Berkeley voters to put this tax on the ballot.

You can gather signatures anytime or sign up for shifts at fruitful locations, April 11 - mid-May.

Join us to gather signatures! KICKOFF: APRIL 11th at 10 am in San Pablo Park
at the Francis Albrier Center, 2800 Park. Look for our signs!

Sign up here: <https://bit.ly/sodataxsignatures26> or



Contact **Holly Scheider** for more info: // 510-435-0328

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Why do we need a new tax measure?

We need to preserve 10 years of public health investments and strengthen our soda tax by dedicating the revenues and increasing the tax rate to 2-cents. The tax has been working! This will replace our current tax and make sure it continues to work indefinitely.

What election will we vote on this? We plan to be on the November 2026 ballot.

How will the new revenues be invested?

We are building upon what we learned from the inaugural tax in 2014. The new funds will continue to help fight type 2 diabetes, heart disease, tooth decay, and childhood obesity. They will continue to fund clean water access, health and nutrition education, and access to healthy and nutritious foods.

- **42.5%** will go to **BUSD specifically for the cooking and gardening programs.**
- **42.5%** will go to **Berkeley-based community organizations** to improve community health.
- **15%** will go to the City of Berkeley to administer the tax and grants.

Is the 2014 Soda Tax working?

Yes! Sugary drink consumption has **declined by 52% among low-income residents and water consumption has increased 29%.** (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30789776/>)

What have the sugary drink tax revenues been spent on?

Since the tax revenues have been collected, the City Council has allocated over \$12 million in community grants through the Healthy Berkeley Program, including:

- Nearly \$6 million to BUSD for the school garden and cooking programs
- \$6.5 million to community-based organizations.

The Healthy Berkeley program has reached 60,000 unduplicated community members:

- nearly 80,000 health and dental screenings
- 30,000 community workshops/classes
- 3,000 food assistance touchpoint
- 16 Hydration Stations installed in Berkeley
- 12,000 BUSD students attended garden or cooking classes in 2024-25

Soda taxes were on the ballot in 2024. Why are we voting again?

In 2024, Berkeley reauthorized our soda tax so it wouldn't expire. With the tax permanently renewed we have a safety net and can dream bigger. Now we want to raise the tax to enhance its health and community benefits. **Big Soda has not stopped marketing junk to our kids, so we want to keep fighting for their health.**

Are soda taxes legal?

The state constitution allows cities like Berkeley to levy taxes on soda distributors for the benefit of community health and well-being. Because they are bullies, Big Soda may sue the city to stop our voter initiative, but their threats should not stop us from doing what is right for our schools and community. And if they do, public health partners will join in defending Berkeley.