

Dear Mayor Libby Schaaf and City Council Members Nikki Fortunato Bas, Dan Kalb, Carroll Fife, Sheng Thao, Noel Gallo, Loren Taylor, Treva Reid, and Rebecca Kaplan,

The undersigned are asking you to: 1) support the recommendations of the Sugar Sweetened Beverage Board (SSBT) for FY 2021-2023 revenue allocations; 2) support the detailed breakdown as outlined below.

These recommendations were based on on-going conversations with over 500+ residents from communities most impacted by sugar sweetened beverage consumption - engaged residents are particularly impacted by diabetes, obesity, and food insecurity. The recommendations below reflect lessons learned by Oakland’s community-based organizations (CBO’s). Many CBO’s support residents most impacted by uplifting their visions for a healthy neighborhood, and leveraging existing infrastructure (i.e corner stores) to improve access in Oakland’s food system. Finally, these recommendations reflect the intention, and expectation, of Oakland voters when they passed Measure HH by focusing on reducing health disparities across Oakland.

While we believe strongly the entire tax revenue should be invested directly in communities most impacted by SSB-related health disparities, we recognize the City of Oakland is facing an unprecedented budget deficit. However, this tax revenue will undoubtedly decrease over time and we urge the city not to depend on an excise tax designed to discourage the purchase of SSB to cover the general budget deficit. It is in the City’s best interest to invest the tax revenue in changing unhealthy conditions that produce the symptoms the tax was designed to alleviate. Investing in community transformations through trust-based relationships between organizations, businesses, and residents to create healthy neighborhoods will lower health care costs, and strengthen the local economy.

Detailed breakdown of SSB tax board recommendation for FY 2021-2023:

#	Allocations	Per Year	%	Description
1	Community Investments	\$3,100,000	36%	Direct assistance to families impacted by adverse health outcomes through a restricted-access card <i>See commentary below</i>
		\$2,000,000	24%	Community-based grants. <i>See commentary below</i>
2	Oakland Unified School District	\$1,000,000	12%	Support Oakland Central Kitchen, Education Center and Instructional Farm. <i>See commentary below</i>
3	City of Oakland	\$850,000	10%	Human Services Department. <i>See commentary below</i>
		\$850,000	10%	OPRYD programming and services. <i>See commentary below</i>
		\$500,000	6%	SSBT administrative staffing. <i>See commentary below</i>
4	Tax Oversight	\$100,000	1%	Evaluation contract. <i>See commentary below</i>
		\$100,000	1%	Community Advisory Board communications

Budget Narrative:

- Allocation # 1 (Community Investments):
 - Oakland can draw inspiration from cities like Seattle and San Francisco and invest \$3.1 million of SSB Tax revenue as direct assistance to families most in need. We recommend expanding on the pilot built in Oakland this fall with CARES Act funding that created a restricted network of gift cards valid at locally owned grocery stores. By increasing the purchasing power of low-income residents for healthy foods and supporting small businesses to shift to health-based products we stimulate the local healthy food market. While this recommended allocation may appear a striking addition from past recommendations, it is what the most impacted residents are asking for based on their lived experiences navigating a food apartheid.

- \$2 million in community grants helps support organizations creating the conditions on the ground for families and businesses to thrive through education, programs, and infrastructure. This grants program should continue with the RFP model. To date, community-based grants have supported both wide-reaching and deeply rooted programs focusing on prevention through education and promotion. Example programs are: healthy neighborhoods and places; health care prevention and mitigation; policy and advocacy; and healthy retail business support. Since the pandemic began, these programs have shifted their focus to respond to urgent community needs and reach 27,000+ residents in services, and subsidizing over \$150,000 of healthy food which equates to ~260,000 pounds of food distributed.
- Allocation # 2 (OUSD): \$1 million allocation to OUSD to support the new Oakland Central Kitchen, Education Center and Instructional Farm. Schools are some of the only remaining neighborhood institutions in Oakland's low-income communities of color. With over 35,000 students, the school district's reach for early intervention is unmatched and the Central Kitchen will support District-wide student-based programming to improve school meals, and provide education focusing on cooking, nutrition, growing food, and water promotion.
- Allocation #3 (City of Oakland): Human Services Department & OPYRD programs that serve families most impacted by sugar sweetened beverage consumption.
- Allocation # 4 (Tax Oversight): A robust independent evaluation is necessary to determine the impact of the SSB Tax. Understanding the impact of community grants and city departments' programming on diabetes and obesity rates will help inform future investments.

We hope you will consider supporting the recommendations of the SSB CAB for the revenue allocations, and support the detailed breakdown as highlighted in this document. Addressing health disparities requires more than a tax focused on individual behavior change, these inequities are the result of racist policies and resource allocations that create conditions in which access to healthy food is exclusive. Due to the declining revenue of the tax, we discourage the city from using Soda Tax revenues to supplant funding for city departments. These unprecedented times of health and economic pain for families calls for bold investment in reshaping the dire food desert conditions communities live in. Allocating \$3.1 million as direct assistance to families most impacted by obesity, diabetes, and COVID-19 will help right historical wrongs. By distributing revenue generated from this regressive tax back to the low-income families it burdens most to spend on health and wellness, Oakland would turn a regressive tax into a progressive solution.

Sincerely,

Gavin Raders, Planting Justice Co-Director
 Lina Ghanem, Saba Grocers Initiative Executive Director
 Ciara Segura, Mandela Partners Co-Director
 Michelle Oppen, Oakland Unified School District, Interim Program Director, The Center
 Danielle Hamilton, Fresh Approach
 Francis Calpotura, In-A(d)vance Executive Director
 Molly Devinney, Sugar Freedom Project Project Coordinator
 Charlie Deterline, SOS Meals on Wheels Executive Director
 Nakia Woods, HOPE Collaborative Director
 Gabriela Galicia, Street Level Health Project Executive Director
 Andrew Park, Trybe Executive Director
 Candice Elder, Executive Director, East Oakland Collective
 Carolyn Johnson, Chief Executive Officer, Black Cultural Zone Community Development Corporation
 Lara Calvert, Executive Director, Spectrum Community Services
 Noha Aboelata, MD, CEO/Founder, Roots Community Health Center
 Tiffani Patton, Oakland Food Policy Council
 Mona Afary, Executive Director, Center for Empowering Refugees and Immigrants (CERI)
 Dr. Cesar A. Cruz, Homies Empowerment
 Ali Wohlgenuth, Program Director, Bay Area Community Resources
 Andrew Williams, Executive Director, East Bay United Soccer Club