

Levying a tax or fee on soda is a strategy that is of interest to advocates because it could serve the dual purpose of: (1) raising revenues to fund health and prevention efforts; and (2) reducing soda consumption. When discussing why soda should be subject to a tax or fee the same way cigarettes and alcohol currently are, here are some talking points which will help support your argument when writing letters to newspaper editors and op-ed columns, or pitching a story to a journalist:

Americans are already taxed by soda

Americans are already paying to treat diseases promoted by the consumption of soda. In fact, we spend billions every year on treatment of diet-related diseases. Why shouldn't some of that money come from the product causing the harm?

It's not such a radical idea to tax soda

Critics argue that soda is not nearly as harmful to health as cigarettes and alcohol, and so it's crazy to tax it in the same way other products are. However, two dozen states, including New York, Arkansas, California, West Virginia, and the city of Chicago already impose special sales taxes on some soft drinks or snack foods.

Soda taxes could help fund health and prevention programs

In a time of economic hardship, a soda tax could provide a way to pay for much-needed health and prevention programs. Furthermore, investments in prevention will yield additional savings by reducing health-care costs in the future.

A soda tax could go to benefit those who need it the most

A soda tax that funds health and prevention programs would benefit lower-income Americans the most.

Less soda means we'll all be healthier and wealthier

As the price of soda increases, consumption will decrease, leading to improved health. What's more, better health means Americans could save billions of dollars each year in medical costs directly related to the treatment of diet-related chronic disease.

Corporations are against health

The soft-drink industry is solely focused on getting consumers to drink more soda. They have great power and resources and they use it to sell their product, whether it is healthy or not. Their opposition should not deter us from a passing tax that would raise much needed funds and improve health.

Money Talks

During the first nine months of 2009, industry groups spent more than \$24 million lobbying against a national tax on sweetened beverages and on other legislative and regulatory issues. How many drinking fountains could be installed in schools with \$24 million? How many PE teachers could be hired with that amount? Soda companies claim to care about health, but their spending tells a different story.