

PHILADELPHIA PASSES SUGAR DRINK TAX



Philadelphia is only the second U.S. city to pass a tax on soda and other sugary drinks. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu, File) (Jeff Chiu)



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Philadelphia has become the second city in the U.S. to pass a tax on sodas.

The Philadelphia City [council voted to levy a 1.5 cents per-ounce tax](#) on all sugar-added and artificially sweetened soft drinks. The tax will mean an additional 18 cents on cans of soda, \$1.08 for a six-pack and \$1.02 for a two-liter bottle.

Mayor Jim Kenney praised the passage of the measure.

"Philadelphia made a historic investment in our neighborhoods and in our education system today. I commend City Council for working with these community leaders to make quality, affordable pre-K, community schools and systemic improvements to parks, rec centers and libraries a reality," he said.

The soda tax will be on top of an existing 8 percent sales tax on beverages. It will go into effect Jan. 1, 2017 and is expected to generate about \$91 million a year for municipal coffers with proceeds going towards expansion of pre-K programs, park and recreation offerings and the city's general fund.

Retailers that sell other less-sugary beverages will be eligible for tax credits and drinks that contain more than 50 percent fruit juice, vegetable juice or milk are exempt from the tax, according to the mayor's office.

The American Beverage Association, which represents Coca-Cola and Pepsi, among others, is vowing to fight the tax.

"When the government and public health officials rely on a tax as a solution to addressing obesity they are sending the message to consumers that elimination of one ingredient or one product will solve their health issues. But many in the public health community know this to be false," the organization said in a written statement.

Philadelphia is the second city in the U.S. to tax soda. In 2014, Berkeley, California became the [first city in the country](#) to levy a soft drink tax. Voters in Oakland, California and Boulder, Colorado will be deciding on a similar tax this fall.



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