

Mr. Yunus Carrim

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa

Department: Standing Committee on Finance

Republic of South Africa

By email: awicomb@parliament.gov.za

25 May 2017

**RE: Petition submission in support of a Health Promotion Levy on Sugary Beverages.**

Our nation’s health is in crisis with diabetes, obesity and other lifestyle related diseases on the rise. We believe the proposed sugary drinks tax could help change this, by reducing sugary drinks consumption.

Sugary drinks are one of the most significant contributors to health problems such as diabetes, obesity, heart disease, liver and kidney damage, and some cancers globally and in South Africa.

In his recent budget speech, the Minister of Finance announced a plan to tax sugary drinks, such as fizzy drinks and energy drinks, and our Parliament will soon consider the proposed tax.

Tackling obesity-related diseases needs to be a national priority, and the proposed tax on sugary drinks is a first step in addressing this national epidemic.

South Africa is already ranked the most obese country in sub-Saharan Africa. Excess sugar consumption is a major cause of obesity and its related diseases, as excessive sugar intake causes increased risk of diabetes, liver and kidney damage, heart disease, and some cancers.

We implore our leaders to put the health of South Africans before the profits of an industry, who target the most vulnerable people with their unhealthy products.

**1258 South Africans have signed the following letter, in support of a strong tax against sugary drinks, and we submit this as a public comment on the proposed tax.**

“We call on you, the leaders of South Africa, to put the health of all South Africans first by implementing a strong sugary drink tax. South Africans are facing a health epidemic linked to obesity, and this tax is the first step in addressing that head on.

I strongly support a tax that covers all the sugar in all sugary drinks in order to be more effective in reducing consumption and related disease.

Results from similar taxes passed in Mexico and California show they curb the consumption of unhealthy beverages in ways that improve health and do not result in jobs losses.

We hope that you will listen to everyday South Africans during this comment period, over the vested corporate interests who are trying to use their influence to derail the sugar tax. Our nation’s health is at stake.”

Please see the attached document for the full list of signatures and comments.

Kind Regards,

Tracey Malawana

Healthy Living Alliance