I would like to thank the Finance committee leadership and members for providing me with the opportunity to comment in support of House Bill 7312-An Act Concerning a Tax on Certain Sweetened Beverages, on behalf of the Bridgeport Department of Health.

The Bridgeport Department of Health aims to promote and protect the health of the people of Bridgeport through the provision of essential health services, monitoring of programs, enforcement of laws and ordinances, and collection of health information. Ensuring that our communities have access to healthy foods is amongst one of our priorities. I believe that taxing sweetened beverages has a multi-tier benefit. The ultimate benefit is to the health of Connecticut residents. Secondly, the proposed bill will have a fiscal benefit. A study conducted by the University of Connecticut Rudd Center estimates that a sugary drink tax in CT could raise $145.2M annually in revenue.¹ In addition to funding obesity prevention and other health programs, this much-needed revenue could help to restore public and social services that are in jeopardy of facing significant cuts. The proposed bill will positively benefit our city residents and the overall health of your constituents.

A number of studies have linked sugary drinks as the primary source of added sugars in American’s diets, and their increased consumption has been associated with rising obesity rates

and increased risk for chronic diseases, such as type-2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, tooth decay and certain cancers. Healthy drink options should be easily accessible and available in places where children and families spend their time, clean drinking water should be available in public places, and healthy drinks should be priced at an equal or lower cost than less healthy options.

In 2014, Berkley, California passed a one-cent per ounce tax on sugary drinks. As a result, University of California, Berkley, found that sugary drink consumption in low-income neighborhoods fell by 21% five months after the tax went into effect, while water consumption rose by 63%. In 2016, other localities also passed sugary drink taxes, including Philadelphia, PA; San Francisco, CA; Oakland, CA; Albany, CA, and; Cook County, IL. Let’s make Connecticut the next state that enacts legislation which will benefit both our community and our fiscal climate.

Thank you for your support. For additional information, please contact me at (203) 576-7680

Respectively Submitted by,

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