

April 1, 2019

Assemblymember Richard Bloom  
State Capitol, Room 2003  
Sacramento, California 94249

**RE: AB 138 (Bloom): California Community Health Fund**  
**AAP-CA Position: COSPONSOR**

Dear Assemblymember Bloom:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing the over 5,000 board-certified pediatrician members of California AAP Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 statewide, is proud to cosponsor your proposed legislation AB 138 (Bloom), which would place a \$0.02 per fluid ounce tax on sugary drinks. It would also establish the California Community Health Fund to expend those funds to promote health equity by preventing leading causes of illness and premature death, especially those caused by sugary drink consumption.

Children and teens consume gallons of sugary drinks every year, including sports drinks, fruit-flavored drinks and sodas. The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that children and teens consume fewer than 10 percent of calories from added sugars. But data show that children and teens now consume 17 percent of their calories from added sugars—nearly half of which comes from drinks alone.

According to Natalie D. Muth, MD, MPH, RDN, FAAP, lead author of a recent national American Academy of Pediatrics policy statement on sugar-sweetened beverages, "For children, the biggest source of added sugars often is not what they eat, it's what they drink...On average, children are consuming over 30 gallons of sugary drinks every year. This is enough to fill a bathtub, and it doesn't even include added sugars from food."

The AAP policy statement highlights these alarming facts: "Excess consumption of added sugars, especially from sugary drinks, contributes to the high prevalence of childhood and adolescent obesity, especially among children and adolescents who are socioeconomically vulnerable. It also increases the risk for dental decay, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, dyslipidemia, insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes mellitus, fatty liver disease, and all-cause mortality." (AAP, March 2019 <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/143/4/e20190282>)

Without decisive action to combat consumption of sugary drinks, many children across California will suffer lifelong ill health and shortened lives.

AB 138 would implement an evidence-based strategy to reduce the consumption of sugary drinks: an excise tax levied on each beverage purchased. These taxes have been shown to be effective at reducing consumption in the cities and countries where they have been put into effect, which is why it is the policy of the American Academy of Pediatrics to support such initiatives. The



revenues resulting from this tax would be dedicated to a fund that combats the public health effects of sugary drink consumption, which stands to improve the health and well-being of millions of California children.

Pediatricians across the state of California strongly support your proposed legislation AB 138. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of the children, youth, and families of California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Zarah Iqbal", followed by a long horizontal line.

Zarah Iqbal, MD  
State Government Affairs  
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP-CA Leadership; AAPCA Advocate Lydia Bourne