MEDIA CONTACT: Michael Miller
Brown·Miller Communications
(925) 381-4766

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Berkeley Voters Approve Measure AA, Expanding Nation's First Sugary Drink Tax

BERKELEY, Calif. November 4, 2026 – Berkeley voters reaffirmed their commitment to community health by approving Measure AA strengthening the nation's first tax on sugary drink distributors. As of 8 a.m. today, Measure AA has received 76.3% of the vote, according to the Alameda County Election Office. The measure increases the tax from one cent to two cents per ounce and guarantees funding for children's health, nutrition and community programs.

“The voters couldn’t be more clear,” said Berkeley resident and parent Castle Sinicrope. “Berkeley puts a priority on the health of our children, our communities and our shared future. With the success of Measure AA, Berkeley can continue to fund critical health programs with fiscal responsibility and accountability.”

Measure AA builds on Berkeley's groundbreaking 2014 sugary drink tax, the first in the nation, which voters renewed in 2024. In addition to increasing the tax, the measure includes a cost-of-living provision to help funding keep pace with rising costs.

The measure is expected to generate approximately $2.2 million annually. Of that funding, 42.5% will support Berkeley Unified School District nutrition and gardening programs, and another 42.5% will support community-based nutrition education, health services and improved access to drinking water. Administrative costs, public oversight and annual reporting are limited to 15%.

“The strong support for this tax is a credit to the responsible use of previous sugary drink tax funds,” said Dr. Xavier Morales, executive director of The Praxis Project and an original member of the City of Berkeley's Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Panel of Experts. “Through targeted funding, we've helped improve health in communities most affected by sugary drink marketing, particularly children and communities of color. The tax has supported school gardens, drinking fountains and nutrition and health programs that have also encouraged greater community involvement in health.”

Since Berkeley passed its first sugary drink tax in 2014, studies have documented significant declines in sugary drink consumption, including reductions of more than 50% in some communities during the first three years. A 2024 study also found that the percentage of Berkeley youth classified as overweight or obese declined by 4.4% compared with similar cities without the tax.

Sugary drinks, including, energy drinks, sports drinks, soda and fruit drinks with added sugar, are a leading source of added sugar in the American diet. According to the American Heart Association, frequent consumption contributes to serious health problems, including heart disease and Type 2 diabetes. Supporters say Measure AA will help Berkeley continue investing in programs that prevent disease and create healthier environments for Berkeley families.

“The American Heart Association was proud to support Measure AA because we know the toll sugary drinks can take on our health. By reducing sugary drink consumption and investing in programs that support the well-being of local families, we can take real steps toward building a healthier Berkeley,” said David B. Vliet, Bay Area American Heart Association board member.

Berkeley has a long history of pioneering policies that influence communities nationwide, from restrictions on smoking in restaurants to curbside recycling and rent stabilization. Supporters hope the success of Measure AA will encourage other cities to make similar investments in public health.

“We're hoping that other cities interested in improving community health will see Berkeley's success as a model,” said Berkeley resident and Measure AA proponent Beatriz Leyva-Cutler. “It's important, it's successful and it's doable!”

For more information about Measure AA, visit www.BerkeleyVsBigSoda.org.

###

Ad paid for by Berkeley Healthy Child Coalition, Sponsored by Public Health Organizations. Ad Committee's Top Funder / Major Funding Provided By: American Heart Association (Oakland, CA; $308,099.47), Robin Silva (Burlingame, CA; $1,047.43), Marice Ashe (Berkeley, CA; $1,047.43), Ecology Center (Berkeley, CA; $1,005.00)