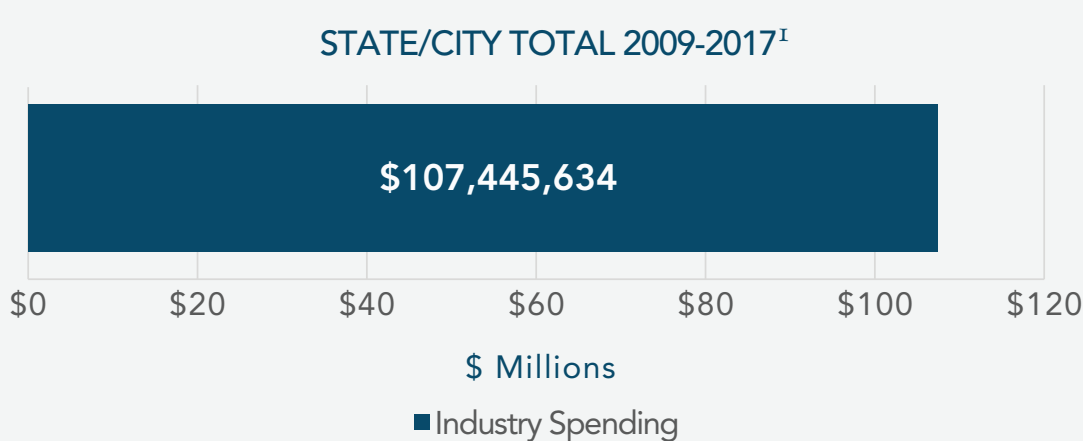


Big Soda vs. Public Health: 2017 Edition

CSPI tracks how much money is spent on the legislative lobbying and ballot campaigns for and against sugary-drink policy initiatives at the state and local levels by reviewing lobbying and campaign disclosure forms. “Big Soda” refers to soda-industry groups opposing these policies; “Public Health” refers to individuals and groups supporting the policies.

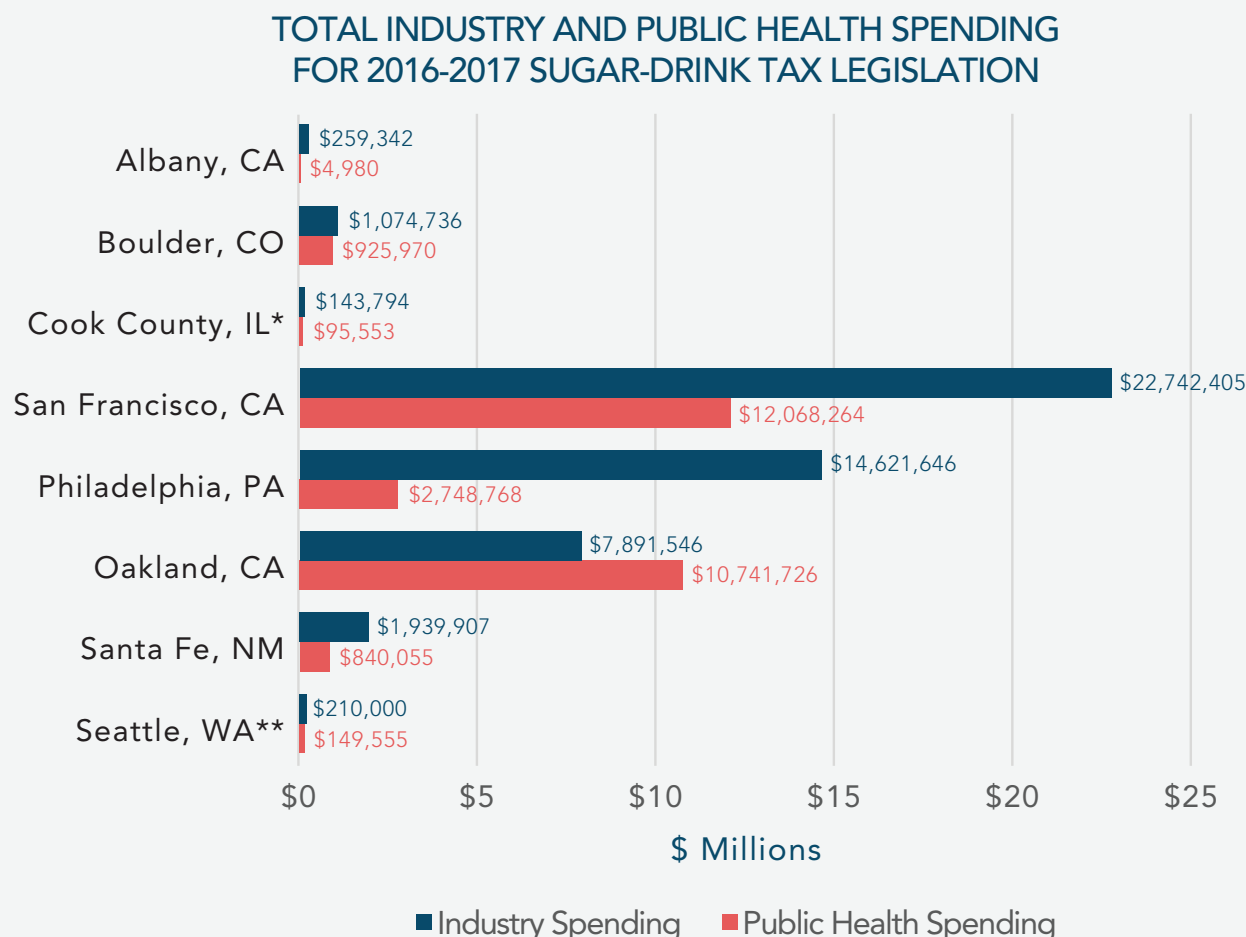
Big Soda Spending to Oppose State and Local Sugary-Drink Policies since 2009

From 2009 to 2014, in state-level battles in Washington and New York, small-town contests in Richmond and El Monte, CA, and Telluride, CO, and big-city dust-ups in New York and Philadelphia, Big Soda easily outspent opponents and beat back sugary-drink policies. Then, in 2014, Berkeley, CA, became the first community to pass a sugary-drink tax in the U.S. Since then, more cities and counties have proposed sugary-drink taxes to decrease consumption and address sugary-drink-related chronic diseases (i.e., obesity, diabetes, and heart disease), as well as to generate revenue to support public-health efforts such as nutrition education, affordable access to healthy foods, pre-K, parks, and libraries.



Sugary-Drink Taxes Gain Momentum in 2016 and 2017

In 2016 and 2017, eight local jurisdictions proposed sugary-drink taxes, and seven passed them in the face of opposition from Big Soda. These include Albany, Oakland, and San Francisco, CA; Boulder, CO; Cook County, IL (includes Chicago); Philadelphia, PA; and Seattle, WA. The proposed 2-cents-per-ounce tax in Santa Fe, NM, was defeated; in November 2017, Cook County repealed the tax it passed because of continued industry lobbying.



* While significant spending on advertising and organizing was reported in the media, these types of expenditures do not have to be reported as lobbying expenditures in Cook County. The infographic only reflects reported lobbying expenditures.

** The Seattle Healthy Kids Coalition urged the city council to adopt a sugary-drink tax, and it subsequently registered to report campaign expenditures should industry file a counter referendum. This level of transparency was not required and the Seattle Healthy Kids Coalition voluntarily reported one \$115,000 donation. Industry did not register or report any campaign donations or expenditures. However, lobbyists from both sides reported their individual, direct lobbying expenditures during the city council’s deliberations. The expenditures reported here are based on the known lobbyists on both sides, plus the one reported donation of \$115,000 to the Seattle Healthy Kids Coalition.

Big Soda’s Spending Edge Diminished in 2016-2017

When sugary-drink measures such as taxes and warning labels were first proposed, Big Soda outspent public health by a landslide. However, with major funders such as Michael Bloomberg, John and Laura Arnold, Healthier Colorado, the American Heart Association, and the Action Now Initiative (supported by the Arnolds) now significantly supporting the public-health side, this edge is greatly reduced. Their contributions have played a major role in the success of these recent initiatives.



Figures updated as of 9/5/2017

[†]CSPI did not track lobbying expenditures made by public-health campaigns to support sugar-drink taxes until 2016.