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Fiscal Policy Division
Department of Finance
Government of the Northwest Territories PO Box 1320
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9
scscomms@gov.nt.ca

Re: Proposed Sugar Sweetened Tax

The NWT Chamber of Commerce is providing a letter of nonsupport for the proposed sugar sweetened tax (SST) that has been presented by the GNWT.

The top priority for the 18th Legislative Assembly as set out by the 18th Legislative Assembly, was to reduce the cost of living for their residents. Throughout this Assembly the GNWT has regularly increased the resident's cost of living as well as the cost of doing business through repeated introduction or raises of "small incremental" fees. The proposed SST is a tax that is negatively targeting essentially 2 businesses in the NT while not following through on "taxing" all junk food which is of extreme concern to the NWT Chamber of Commerce. The NT will be the only jurisdiction in Canada with such a tax and as indicated above the proposed tax is not all encompassing of unhealthy food choices such as candy, chips, chocolate bars, etc., as has been done in other jurisdiction around the world.

An SST tax has been introduced in a number of countries such as Mexico and most recently in Philadelphia where the consumption of sugar was not reduced and those working in the targeted businesses were laid off. As per a representative of the NWT & NU Public Health Assoc indicated that a tax will not deter unhealthy choices. Marnie Bell indicated "being overweight and being obese is more complicated. It's not as simple as just taxing something to try and curtail people's consumption of beverages". The fact that the price of sugar sweetened drinks are so much more cheaper than milk and other healthy option beverages is what needs to be focused on and find ways to reduce those prices instead of increasing the others.

Regards,

A blue ink signature of Renée Comeau.

Renée Comeau
Executive Director, NWT Chamber of Commerce

A black ink signature of Trevor Wever.

Trevor Wever
President, NWT Chamber of Commerce

Cc: Kelly Bluck