

Great Day! “Healthy Schools” Fully Funded!

May 26th, 2010 (Source: <http://www.theslowcook.com/2010/05/26/great-day-healthy-schools-fully-funded/>ully Funded!)

The D.C. Council this afternoon approved a slightly scaled back tax on soft drinks—6 percent, as opposed to 1 cent per ounce—but enough to provide the \$6.5 million needed annually to fully fund improved school meal and other programs under “Healthy Schools” legislation.

“I am pleased to share the great news that the Healthy Schools Act has been fully funded. Ninety minutes ago, the Council passed the District’s FY 2011 budget, which included the soda sales tax to fund the Healthy Schools Act,” said an aide to Councilmember Mary Cheh (D-Ward 3), who authored the legislation and had proposed the soda tax as a means to fund “Healthy Schools” and also reduce consumption of sugary beverages as part of the city’s fight against obesity.

“When the new school year begins in 12 weeks, schools will begin to serve more nutritious meals, start to increase their physical and health education, and improve the overall health of our school buildings,” the aide said.

The beverage industry had launched a fierce campaign against Cheh’s soda tax. Even going into today’s vote on the city’s budget, [it was unclear](#) whether there would be enough votes to overcome widespread opposition to a new tax on sodas, which until now have been treated the same as food, meaning not subject to tax. Even Council Chairman Vincent Gray, an early co-sponsor of “Healthy Schools,” had urged a slower approach to any new taxes. But an amendment to strip the soda tax from the final budget measure was defeated.

Healthy schools provides more city funds for public school breakfasts and lunches while also increasing student access to free meals. It provides funding for schools to incorporate locally grown produce in cafeterias as well as grants for school gardens.