

Comments on CB 17 Amendments

Ellen Valentino [evalentino@ellenv Valentino.com]

Sent: Monday, July 06, 2015 9:53 AM
To: CouncilMail
Cc: Clay, Mary; Leonardo McClarty [lmcclarty@howardchamber.com]
Importance: High

Dear Chairwoman Sigaty,

We just received the proposed amendments to CB 17 and feel as though there are very significant issues that have not been addressed and need further review.

1. The healthy food and beverage standards coupled with the requirement that 75% of the offerings meet this standard, and adding in the restrictive language on diet offerings, will have the consequence of eliminating product offerings many of which are healthy popular alternatives like teas and other low-cal options. **Examples of healthy options that do not meet these standards are many of the Vitamin Water offerings, Gatorade, Gold Peak Iced Tea, most Honest Tea Products, and many others.** (These standards are more restrictive than the CDC guidelines that were mentioned in the workgroup.)
2. The packaged food and beverage placement requirements again coupled with the restrictive food and beverage standard will cause great difficulty for county vendors to literally comply, stock, maintain, and turn a profit from vending sales.
3. **The practicality is as follows: A beverage vending machine with "10" offerings of which "2" can be outside the scope of the standard; coupled with the restriction that only 1/3 can be diet offerings; coupled with the marketing requirement that 1/2 of each row meet the healthy standard – does not work and will render vending machine sales for the vendor and county, stranded assets – as well as leaving county employees and visitors frustrated with the lack of popular healthy choice options and sold out flashing buttons.**
4. There will be a negative financial impact to the County since the County receives commissions from vending machine sales.

Other issues:

1. You should know that the definition of packaging will cause significant issues teams, groups, vendors, and consumers. This creates a whole new set of consequences not previously discussed.
2. The issue of providing free water is difficult. There are health standards and real security issues.

The better direction:

1. Evaluation first. The Council needs a better understanding of the impact of the legislation. How many vending locations are impacted? Where? What Properties? What products are being sold now? What food and beverages meet this list? What does not? Can vendors comply? How much revenue does the County derive? How much will be lost to sales? And most importantly will this have an impact on individual lifestyles or just restrict choices from county employees, and visitors?
2. The industry is committed to working to provide The Calories Count™ Beverage Vending Program which will offer consumers clear calorie information, encourage lower-calorie beverage choices and remind them that calories count in all the choices they make. On the front of vending machines, they'll see Calories Count™ signs that include one of the following messages: "Check Then Choose" or "Try A Low-Calorie Beverage." The selection buttons will also include calorie labels that show calorie counts per beverage container.

3. We can meet at your convenience, respond in a workgroup to any of the issues raised above or to specific questions you, the sponsor, or others may have.

Thank you.

Cc: Howard County Council Members