

**Health Commission
City and County of San Francisco
Resolution No. 09-10**

Resolution to Support an Alcohol Mitigation Fee Program

WHEREAS, alcohol is a leading cause of death for men and women in San Francisco, and

WHEREAS, excessive alcohol use is a leading cause of death and injury, from impaired driving to violence, sexual assault, and suicide, and

WHEREAS, illness, disability and premature death can be directly attributed to excessive alcohol use, and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has called excessive alcohol consumption the third leading preventable cause of death in the United States, and

WHEREAS, a 2010 study published in *The Open Epidemiology Journal*, found that excessive alcohol use resulted in approximately 10,600 deaths and 72,000 nonfatal hospitalizations in California during 2006 alone, and

WHEREAS, in another peer-reviewed study, the estimated annual economic costs of alcohol use in California for 2005 are between \$35.4 billion and \$42.2 billion, including \$5.4 billion in medical and mental health spending, \$25.3 billion in work losses, and \$7.8 billion in criminal justice spending, property damage, and other public program costs, and

WHEREAS, the San Francisco Department of Public Health considers excessive alcohol use a major public health problem, and

WHEREAS, in San Francisco, excessive alcohol use ranks among the leading causes of premature mortality; Specifically, from 2004-2007, the Department of Public Health found that alcohol is a leading cause of premature death among men in San Francisco, accounting for approximately 10% of all their years of life lost. The Department of Public Health also found that excessive alcohol use is a notable cause of premature death among women in San Francisco, falling between fifth and fifteenth as the leading cause of premature death for that group, and

WHEREAS, in Fiscal Year 2006-2007 – the most recent year for which the San Francisco Medical Examiner published findings – alcohol was the primary cause of death in 7.7% of natural deaths certified by that office. Alcohol also is involved in a significant number of accidental deaths in San Francisco. In FY 2006-2007, 33% percent of all non-vehicular accidental death victims tested by the Medical Examiner had significant levels of alcohol in their blood. In that same year, alcohol was present in 32.7% of all vehicular fatalities in San Francisco. Alcohol also was present in 25% of all

suicides tested by the Medical Examiner that year. In addition, 31.8% of all tested homicide victims in San Francisco in FY 2006-2007 had positive blood alcohol levels at the time of death, and

WHEREAS, the City and County of San Francisco incurs a range of substantial costs that are attributable to excessive alcohol consumption, including but not limited to, the costs of medical care for people with alcohol-related illnesses, treatment and prevention of alcohol misuse, law enforcement for alcohol-related incidents, and emergency response for alcohol-related motor vehicle collisions. In addition, San Francisco incurs costs when individuals experience disability, diminished capacity, and premature death due to alcohol use, and

WHEREAS, in 2010, The Lewin Group and Oxford Outcomes, Inc. ("Nexus Study Authors") conducted a nexus study to calculate a portion of the City and County of San Francisco's health costs attributable to Alcoholic Beverages. The report, *The Cost of Alcohol to San Francisco: Analyses Supporting an Alcohol Mitigation Fee* ("Nexus Study") is incorporated herein by reference, and

WHEREAS, conservative estimates conclude that the City of San Francisco bears the cost of \$17.1 million annually, for medical care of people with alcohol-related illnesses; alcohol abuse treatment and prevention; alcohol-related emergency medical transport; as well as disability and death due to alcohol use, and

WHEREAS, the proposed Ordinance file number 100865 introduced by Supervisor John Avalos June 22, 2010, and cosponsored by Supervisors Ross Mirkarimi and Sophie Maxwell, establishes the Alcohol Mitigation Fee to reimburse the City and County of San Francisco for portion of its otherwise aforementioned unreimbursed annual costs attributable to excessive alcohol use as identified in the Nexus Study, and

WHEREAS, according to the legislative digest, "Alcoholic beverage wholesalers, and certain other businesses who sell alcohol in San Francisco without wholesalers in the distribution chain, must pay the Fee quarterly to the Office of the Treasurer and Tax Collector"

WHEREAS, the fee is wisely allocated to primarily regional wholesalers, and on importers and on products produced and consumed in the city, instead of on consumers, retailers or bars and restaurants, and

WHEREAS, according to the legislative digest, "the Fee would reimburse the City for the following costs: 1) the unreimbursed health care costs of treating alcohol-attributable conditions, 2) the unreimbursed costs of emergency transport due to alcohol, 3) alcohol prevention and treatment programs including treatment on demand programs administered by the Department of Public Health, and 4) administration costs, including but not limited to fee collection, investigation, and enforcement costs," and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, The Health Commission commends the efforts involved in recovering alcohol-related costs to the City of San Francisco to sustain needed alcohol-related services.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that:

The Health Commission urges the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor to support the establishment of the San Francisco Alcohol Mitigation Fee, a crucial policy measure to restore funding for some of the essential services and programs essential to treatment and provider agencies, health care institutions, transport services, youth education, and medical service employment.

I hereby certify that the San Francisco Health Commission at its meeting of August 3, 2010 adopted the foregoing resolution.



Mark Morewitz, MSW
Health Commission Executive Secretary