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### **Washington Farmers say Yes! To Affordable Groceries**

**LACEY, WA** -- The Washington Farm Bureau today announced it is proud to be one of many agriculture, business and community organizations supporting Washington State Initiative 1634, Yes! To Affordable Groceries, on the November ballot. I-1634 will prohibit new, local taxes on food and beverages.

#### **Statement from Washington State Farm Bureau President Mike LaPlant:**

*"Farm and ranch families depend upon a strong agricultural economy. We know that a patchwork system that allows for increases in local taxes on food and beverages will only make it harder for us to sell the goods that we farm. Agriculture is a major part of our state's economy and an important job creator. But family farmers are already operating on thin margins, and local taxes on food will have a significant impact on how our farms operate, as those costs will make it more expensive to produce our goods. We joined this coalition because we cannot afford to let our farming community suffer any more in Washington, and we need to protect against another hardship and additional uncertainty that will make it even harder for our family farms to survive."*

While the Washington state government doesn't currently collect taxes on food and beverages, the Attorney General and Office of Fiscal Management have confirmed there is a loophole in the law (already exploited in Seattle) that allows local governments to impose taxes on groceries, which hits working families the hardest. I-1634 takes a proactive step to close this loophole and prevent any new taxes that target food, beverages and their ingredients in Washington.

Washington farmer April Clayton of Red Apple Orchards in Orondo, a co-sponsor of I-1634, captured the concerns of many farmers during a roundtable event on Yes! To Affordable Groceries in Wenatchee on Thursday (9/19):

*"It's critical to take a stand on behalf of our family farms and small businesses that are vulnerable to any new tax on food or beverages. A few years ago, we never would have thought that the beautiful, nutritious produce we grow in the Pacific Northwest would be threatened by taxes on groceries, but it's happening: juices, teas and a long list of other beverages have already been hit by the Seattle tax and there's no reason to think that won't spread. We can't standby and let Washington agriculture be forced to endure another blow -- It's already hard enough to make this work for ourselves and our families."*

WFB joins a [long list of partners](#) supporting the initiative, including the Washington Cattlemen's Association, Washington State Dairy Federation, Washington State Tree Fruit Association, Ethnic Chambers of Commerce Coalition, Seattle Building Trades, Washington Food Industry Association, and multiple chambers of commerce and labor unions.

The initiative is also supported by a broad coalition of more than 1,400 restaurants, grocers, convenience stores, cafes, food carts and other small businesses whose owners are concerned about the impact of taxes on groceries. View the full list [here](#).

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Paid for by Yes! to Affordable Groceries, supported by the Joint Council of Teamsters No. 28, Washington Farm Bureau, Washington Food Industry Association, and Korean-American Grocer's Association of Washington, and sponsored by the American Beverage Association. Top 5 contributors: Washington Food Industry Association; The Coca-Cola Company; PepsiCo, Inc.; Keurig Dr Pepper, and Red Bull North America. PO Box 50705, Bellevue, Washington, 98015.