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## **Issue 7 wins endorsements from organized labor**

*Unions join effort to renew tax on alcohol, tobacco*

**CLEVELAND – March 24, 2014** – Organized labor today announced it is endorsing Issue 7 on the May 6 ballot. The measure calls for renewing the existing tax on alcohol and tobacco in Cuyahoga County.

Revenues from the tax would be used to pay for major repairs at publicly owned Progressive Field, Quicken Loans Arena and FirstEnergy Stadium. It is not a tax increase. The tax costs 1.5 cents for a bottle of beer, a penny for a glass of wine and 4.5 cents for a pack of cigarettes.

“This is an existing tax and it generates multiple benefits for Cuyahoga County and for workers here,” said Harriet Applegate, Executive Secretary of the North Shore Federation of Labor – which represents 146 unions in Greater Cleveland.

“Those buildings were built by union labor, and the repairs going forward will be done by union men and women,” she said. “It means jobs, but it also means that we will protect and preserve our very valuable reputation as a major league city – which is important on multiple levels.”

The Keep Cleveland Strong campaign welcomes organized labor to the growing numbers of people and organizations that are supporting the small tax renewal. This significant support from local unions representing thousands of Cuyahoga County working men and women should dispel false, misleading claims that the tax somehow benefits only the wealthy. None of the money from the tax goes to team owners or players.

“Union members make up a large part of Cuyahoga County, and we appreciate their support,” said Kevin Kelley, Cleveland City Council President. “People all across Cuyahoga County are beginning to look at the facts associated with this issue. When most people take the time to examine the facts, they come to the conclusion that it

makes sense to continue paying 1.5 cents a beer to keep our publicly owned major league sports buildings in major league condition.”

Dave Wondolowski, Executive Secretary of the Cleveland Building & Construction Trades – which represents 17X craft unions - said he is strongly urging his members to vote yes on Issue 7.

“There are so many reasons why renewing this small tax makes sense,” Wondolowski said.

“I usually start with it means jobs for our members,” he said. “But it also means that these buildings will be maintained, meaning they will continue to be important, impressive parts of downtown Cleveland – where there is now a multi-billion revitalization occurring. The building activity downtown of course, has meant – and will continue to mean for years to come – even more jobs for our members. The construction of Progressive Field and Quicken Loans Arena triggered the revitalization of downtown Cleveland.”