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Cuyahoga County Mayors & City Managers Association endorses Issue 7

Suburban leaders say sports facilities and events benefit the entire County

CLEVELAND – March 27, 2014 – Issue 7, the effort to renew the Cuyahoga County tax on tobacco and alcohol got a big boost today when the issue was endorsed by the Cuyahoga County Mayors and City Managers Association. The association is composed of 57 mayors and city managers from communities in Cuyahoga County.

The renewal is on the May 6 county-wide ballot. It is not a tax increase, but would merely extend the existing, small tax on alcohol and tobacco that is purchased in Cuyahoga County. The tax is 1.5 cents on a bottle of beer, a penny on a glass of wine and 4.5 cents on a pack of cigarettes.

The revenues would be used to pay for major repairs and improvements at Progressive Field, FirstEnergy Stadium and Quicken Loans Arena. All three of those venues are publicly owned. None of the money from the tax would go to team owners.

“Cuyahoga County mayors and managers understand that voting yes on Issue 7 protects our assets without raising taxes,” said Independence Mayor Gregory Kurtz, president of the association. “Our three major sports teams generate jobs for our residents and contracts for our businesses.”

Warrensville Heights Mayor Brad Sellers added: “I support a continued prudent investment in these publically owned assets, which leverages a greater economic return for the region.”

Cleveland is one of only 15 cities to have franchises from MLB, the NBA and the NFL. Games and events at the three buildings have generated billions of dollars of economic impact for Greater Cleveland.

Bay Village Mayor Debbie Sutherland, said: “Our professional sports facilities help keep Cleveland a major league city. They boost our image and help us compete for business and events.”

Joe Roman, CEO and President of the Greater Cleveland Partnership, emphasized that Cleveland’s three major league venues benefit the entire county.

“Cleveland is blessed with a fine array of excellent suburbs, but those smaller cities depend – to a significant degree – upon the fiscal health and well-being of the central city,” Roman said. “As Cleveland moves forward with growth, economic development and job creation, it tends to carry the suburbs along with it. Our three major league buildings are a big part of that good momentum, which benefits not only downtown, but all of Cuyahoga County.”

Nancy Lesic, spokeswoman for Keep Cleveland Strong, said “This is another important endorsement for Issue 7.”

“We have found over and over that when people take the time to study the facts involved with this issue, they usually come down in favor of it,” Lesic said. “This is the best way to ensure that these facilities remain in major league condition.”

For a full list of endorsements, go to www.keepclevelandstrong.org