



Paid for by the Coalition for Greater Cleveland's Future, Mary Grace Staph, Treasurer, 812 Huron Rd., Suite 890 Cleveland, OH 44115

## **Big Tobacco from out of state needs to butt out of trying to influence outcome of Cuyahoga County Issue 7**

*Virginia-based cigarette maker Philip Morris now involved in opposition here*

**CLEVELAND – May 1** – More out-of-town industries are joining the opposition against Issue 7 – which seeks to extend the small tax on alcohol and tobacco in Cuyahoga County.

The opposition to the county-wide tax issue has now grown to include Virginia-based Philip Morris - a cigarette company that sells brands including Marlboro and Virginia Slims.

The issue will be decided by Cuyahoga County voters May 6, but opposition to the local tax issue is attracting out of town lobbying groups and companies that want the tax defeated.

Issue 7 is not a tax increase. It continues the same 1.5 cents per beer, a penny on a glass of wine and 4.5 cents on a pack of cigarettes that has been in place since voters approved it more than 20 years ago. Revenues from the tax would be used to finance major repairs and other improvements at Cleveland's three public-owned major league sports facilities.

"I totally respect the right of any Cuyahoga County resident to oppose Issue 7," said Cleveland Councilman Joe Cimperman, who supports passage of Issue 7. "Indeed, we've had robust discussion about this issue. But this is a local issue. The last thing we need is a huge tobacco company from Virginia suddenly showing up to try to defeat this issue, presumably for their own self-interest. Tobacco companies have already done enough damage in this country – we don't need them to get involved in what is a wholly local issue."

Other out-of-town interests that are helping finance opposition to Issue 7 include the Columbus-based Wholesale Beer & Wine Association.

The Coalition for Greater Cleveland's Future – which is overseeing the campaign to pass Issue 7 – this week filed a complaint with the Ohio Elections Commission against a group dubbed the Coalition Against Unfair Taxes (CAUT). CAUT – in a partial disclosure of its funding sources – is financed by out of town sources. CAUT is using the out of town money to buy a negative and misleading television ad campaign opposing Issue 7.

The complaint also states that CAUT failed to disclose campaign expenditures that appear to have occurred prior to the cutoff date for reporting all contributions and expenses.

Here's how support is aligning:

**FOR ISSUE 7**

Mayor Frank Jackson  
Cuyahoga County Mayors & Managers  
UAW  
Building Trades  
Fraternal Order of Police  
NAACP  
Plain Dealer  
Call & Post  
Crain's Cleveland Business  
And many others, go to  
[www.keepclevelandstrong.org](http://www.keepclevelandstrong.org)

**AGAINST ISSUE 7**

Earl Martin, Avon Lake  
Tobacco Industry, Virginia  
CAST and the Coalition Against Unfair Taxes  
Retail Merchants Association out of Columbus  
Ohio beer & wine distributors out of Columbus  
Ralph Nader

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