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June 18, 2025

Mayor Robert M. Dyer &

City Council Members

Municipal Center

City Hall, Building #1

2401 Courthouse Drive

Virginia Beach, Virginia 23456

Honorable Mayor Dyer and Members of City Council,

The Virginia Beach Restaurant Association strongly opposes the July 1 meals tax increase and all meal taxes that have long burdened our industry and community. The restaurant industry is not the only one affected by this but any consumer who purchases a prepared meal from a sit down or fast casual restaurant, grocery, convenience store. Originally intended as a temporary "luxury tax" for sand replenishment, it has evolved into a permanent levy funding multiple unrelated projects, despite promises of sunset provisions.

Restaurant owners typically earn just 3–5% in profit, while the city collects 6% on sales, including tips—making more from restaurant revenue than most owners do. Our businesses are already struggling with rising costs, staffing challenges, and economic pressure. This tax will lessen customer traffic and force more local restaurants to close. National chains may survive; independents will not.

The VBRA is committed to advocating for policies that support the long-term health of our local restaurant industry. As part of that effort, we will engage with and support candidates who share our vision of reducing the meals tax to 3.5%, with the goal of eventual elimination. We plan to educate our members, staff, customers, and followers about where candidates stand on this important issue ahead of the 2026 and 2028 elections. Attached are signatures from restaurateurs supporting this initiative, along with the number of employees, mailing list subscribers, and social media followers they represent. Our collective voice is strong, and we look forward to working with city leadership to create meaningful, positive changes for our industry, residents, and visitors.

We support law enforcement, teachers, and infrastructure improvements. However, we believe these should be funded through the general fund, not through an unsustainable burden on one industry. The hospitality sector is a cornerstone of our local economy - employing thousands, supporting community events, and helping Virginia Beach thrive.

Sincerely,

A close up of a sign

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Debbie Lou T. Hague

President

Virginia Beach Restaurant Association

Your Signature

Printed Name

Restaurant Name & Address

District # based on your home address

Number of Employees

Do you have a mailing (email) list? Y/N How many are on the list?