# Healthy Food America
**Moving Science to Action**

## Compare Tax Policies: A Quick Start Guide

Welcome to Healthy Food America's new "Compare Tax Policies" feature.  This interactive database allows for easy, detailed examination of precedent and variation in sugary drink tax ordinance language by posing policy questions and linking answers to relevant legal text.  The database includes municipal ordinances implemented or pursued in the US since 2014.  It's intended for use by members of the legal, public health, governmental, and advocate communities.

## Getting Oriented in Map View

There are several ways to view and compare text across ordinances.  We'll get to those options.  First let's explore the opening screen, which appears in Map view.

On the left, there's a list of questions pertinent to tax ordinance language.  On the right, there's a map that shows municipalities where a tax was implemented or attempted since 2014.  The first question in the list, "Has a sugary drink tax been enacted?" is highlighted in green, and the map has colored the location points according to the answer to that question (8 sites in blue for "Yes," 1 site in yellow for "No").  Below the map, you'll see a simple table that displays location names and their corresponding responses to the highlighted question.

In the table, you'll see two symbols: a section sign §, and a caution sign.

Click on the green section sign §, and you'll see the text that corresponds to the language in that location's ordinance that answers the question.



Notice the small double section sign in blue §§ to the right of the text under "Excerpts from the Law." Click that, and you'll see the text that answers the highlighted question in context of the full ordinance. You can scroll up and down the full ordinance to see what precedes and follows the marked text.

Click on the caution sign to read an accompanying note that advises how to interpret the answer presented. For instance, in the tax enactment question, the caution note associated with Cook County (at the bottom of the list) says, "The Sweetened Beverage Tax was passed on 11/10/2016 but was repealed on 10/12/2017."



Click on any question in the list (so it highlights in green) to see responses for that particular question.

## Profile View

Above the map, there are two tabs: Profiles and Map. Map view is helpful for getting a visual overview of variation between sites, but Profile view lets you compare ordinance text in greater detail. If you click Profiles, a profile card for each location appears that responds to the question highlighted in green. The section § and caution symbols work the same way as in the map view table.

The default view will show profile cards for all locations. If you want to compare a smaller number of sites, or view just one site, you can select them by clicking in the white field in the blue box. A dropdown menu will appear. You can select multiple sites, but must select them from the menu one at a time.
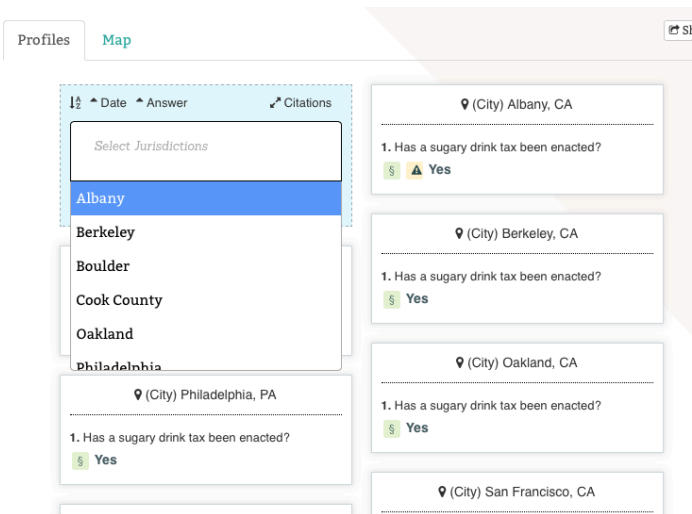


Click on the options at the top of the blue box to sort profile card responses among selected locations alphabetically, chronologically, or by like answers.

Click on Citations in the upper right corner of the blue box to change the profile cards to an expanded view that includes not just the answer to the highlighted question, but adds any caution text and the corresponding ordinance text. This is one of the most useful ways to view the tax database.
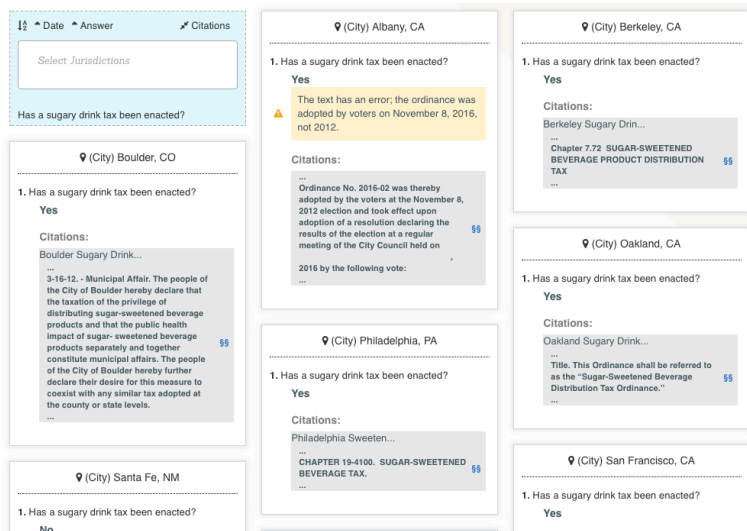
If you wish, you can highlight the text excerpts with your cursor, then copy and paste them into another document.  There is currently not a way to export these excerpts into a table automatically; that may be a future feature.
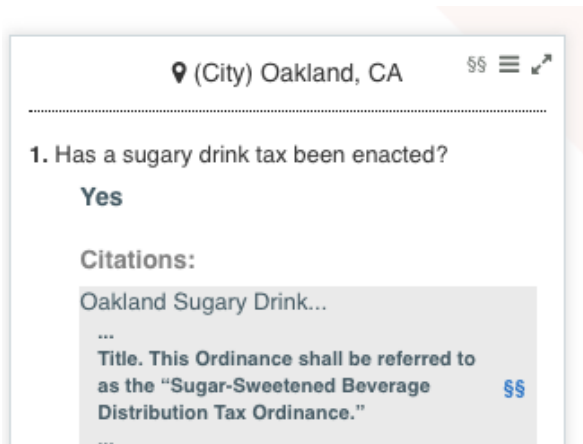
There are additional viewing options that become visible only when you hover your cursor over a particular profile card.  They appear in the upper right corner.



Click the section symbol §§ to view the full ordinance text for that location.  (Note the specific text answering the green highlighted question will not be highlighted in the full ordinance text in this view.)

Click the triple horizontal line to view responses (and, if in citation view, corresponding text) to every question in the list for that site.

Click on the arrows to widen the profile box.  This function is the most useful when viewing the full ordinance text.

You can also arrive at Profile view by clicking on a jurisdiction point on the map. Then the Profiles tab will load automatically to explore just that jurisdiction.  You may then add more jurisdictions for comparison by entering the name of another jurisdiction in the text box found above the Profile card, or using the dropdown menu.


## Using Explore and Filter

There are two major ways to explore the questions in the list on the left: explore and filter.   The instructions to this point have been written as if using Explore view.  Filter view uses much of the same functionality.  You can choose between them by clicking the appropriate box above the list.
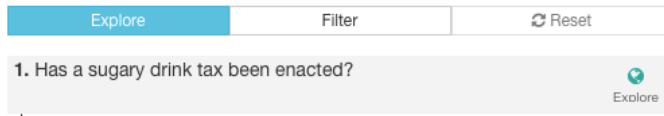
Here's a quick overview of the differences.

**The Explore function** allows a quick glance by displaying responses across all jurisdictions for a single question.

*To make a query:*
Just click on a question on the left to make it active, the Map and Profile Cards will load all relevant data. The map will show the differences in answers and provide a legend to explain different colors that may appear.

**The Filter function** allows users to build complicated queries and visualize where the criteria is met on both the Map and Profile view.

*To make a query:*
From the questions on the left, select the answers to set criteria. The criteria will display above the questions, allowing you to keep track of what you're selected.

The map will show jurisdictions highlighted in two colors, one for positive and one for negative results.

Switch to the Profiles tab to explore the Profile Cards for all the questions, answers, citations, and legal text that meet the selected criteria.