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### Governor takes fat tax, iPod tax off the table

ALBANY – Governor David Paterson and legislative leaders Wednesday announced they were taking the so-called “fat tax” on sugared soft drinks, an Internet download tax and others on recreational activities, off the table.

The \$1.3 billion being cut from the state’s proposed budget will be made up by federal stimulus money, said the Governor.

The tax would have been devastating to the soft drink industry, Timothy Tenney, president of Pepsi Cola Bottling of the Hudson Valley, told MidHudsonNews.com.



Gunther (file): "... just didn't cut it"

“To pick on just one industry makes no sense,” he said. “This country seems to be looking for someone to blame for our problems rather than solving the problem and to pick out just our industry would have been catastrophic. We’re pretty excited that the governor has come to our senses.”

Other nuisance taxes that would be eliminated include sales tax on entertainment-related spending such as for movie theaters, live theatre, concerts, golf, skiing, and bowling.

“These new and increased taxes were not appropriate and would have just added to the financial stress most New Yorkers are already experiencing,” said Democratic Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther, a registered nurse, who said she did not support them in the first place. And to say the tax on sugared soda would have helped people slim down, just didn’t cut it.

“The most important thing with children and adults is education regarding healthy nutrition and I think if you take one sugared soft drink, that that’s not really going to do the trick. It’s a whole lifestyle change. We’ve put a lot of focus in our schools at this point on nutrition.”

Another Democratic Assemblyman, Frank Skartados, said that in these tough economic times, “the last thing we should be doing is taxing families right and left on the seemingly small things that add up fast.”

Republican Marc Molinaro said that taxpayers of the Hudson Valley “scored an initial victory in this year’s budget battle as we eliminated several of the budget’s most oppressive taxes.”

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