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ICYMI: *San Jose Mercury News*: Guest Editorial: Mark Hinkle: California doesn't need more tax dollars

(SACRAMENTO)—In a guest opinion piece published today in the *San Jose Mercury News*, local taxpayer advocate Mark Hinkle argues that the state is on strong financial footing and new taxes are not needed. There are more than \$140 billion in proposed new and higher taxes currently being debated in the Legislature, including a higher tobacco tax to fund health care problems. However, a higher tobacco tax, Hinkle argues, will increase black market sales and decrease legal, taxable sales. Tying health care program funding to a diminishing revenue stream like a tobacco tax is shortsighted and will mean even more taxes in the future.

***San Jose Mercury News*: Mark Hinkle: California doesn't need more tax dollars**

It seems like you can't open the paper today without reading a story about new taxes being proposed or existing ones being increased. In fact, according to a recent report by the California Taxpayers Association, more than \$140 billion in new and higher taxes has been proposed in just the past seven months!

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If you didn't know any better, you'd think the state was hurting for money and that politicians were scraping the bottom of the coffers to make ends meet and fund vital programs. In fact, they have produced a balanced budget and at the same time dramatically increased K-12 education spending, paid down long-term debt and funded the state's "rainy day" savings account. And with all that, we still have more than a \$6 billion surplus.

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Take, for example, the proposed tobacco tax increase. Despite the fact that a tobacco tax increase was defeated just three years ago, special interest groups are looking to raise tobacco taxes again to fund health care programs. History shows that when the tobacco tax is increased, fewer people purchase tobacco legally, which means the state would be attempting to fund ongoing and often growing programs with a dwindling revenue stream. So it won't be long until we're asked to pass another tax to replace or augment the tax we just passed to fund the very same programs.

To read the entire guest editorial, [please click here](#).