The Honorable Nily Rozic
Chair
Committee on Consumer Affairs and Protection

Chair Rozic and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about concession pricing in New York. My name is Brian Hess and I am the Executive Director of Sports Fans Coalition, the nation's leading nonprofit advocacy group that exclusively fights for the rights of sports fans. Whether that's opposing sports blackouts, advocating for consumer protections in sports betting and ticketing, working towards pay equality for female athletes; we represent fans wherever public policy impacts the games we love.

Almost everyone in this room has some version of the same memory: your first game in the Bronx or at the Garden, a kid's face when they catch their first foul ball. For me, it was the fourth-inning Dippin' Dots my mom and I never skipped. Those moments are how teams turn kids into lifelong fans. But for a growing number of New York families, that first game isn't happening. The ticket isn't always what stops them. It's everything after the gate. A family of four now spends close to $400 for one game at Yankee Stadium.[1] That's a week of groceries. Even Arthur Blank, owner of the Atlanta Falcons, admits a $2 hot dog shouldn't become $7 the moment you walk through security. In New York, it already has, in stadiums taxpayers helped build.[2]

As you will soon hear more about from groups like Groundwork Collaborative, concessions generate approximately $20 billion from sports fans on an annual basis[3] and prices are quickly increasing.

New Yorkers pay some of the highest concession prices in professional sports, and they're paying them in buildings their own tax dollars helped construct. Almost every major league stadium in New York benefits from public support, and fans still pay steep prices. Measured against nearby retail prices, nearly every soda and hot dog we reviewed at New York's major venues would fail the 20% standard in the Fair Concession Pricing Act.

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[1]Ben Mendelowitz, "The Cheapest and Most Expensive MLB Stadiums for a Family Day Out," *Action Network*, March 20, 2025, https://www.actionnetwork.com/mlb/the-cheapest-and-most-expensive-mlb-stadiums

[2] Ken Belson, "In Atlanta, Concessions Prices Go Down and Revenue Goes Up," *New York Times*, January 25, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/25/sports/football/nfl-concessions

[3]Emily DiVito, Alex Jacquez, and Elizabeth Pancotti, "Shakedown at the Snack Counter: The Case for Street Pricing," *Groundwork Collaborative*, March 27, 2025, https://groundworkcollaborative.org/work/street-pricing/.

- Highmark stadium sells the most expensive hot dog in the NFL for $11.63[4] even though taxpayers put $850 million towards the Bills' new home[5].
- Madison Square Garden receives an annual property tax break of about $42 million[6] and still charges Rangers fans $16 for a beer, which is 75% more than the median pint in Manhattan.[7]
- Barclays Center received approximately $260 million in direct city and state funding for land and infrastructure,[8] yet charges Nets fans $8 for popcorn. If you want to enjoy the game with a beer, it will cost you nearly double what a Brooklyn bar charges.[9]
- UBS Arena leases the land below market value[10] and spent $68 million on related projects[11]. Islanders fans still pay $15 for a beer, $7 for a soda, and $8 for a hot dog.
- Despite an estimated $234 million in public subsidies,[12] Citi Field charges $17.29 for a 24 oz Coors Light[13] that costs $3.19 at a nearby 7-Eleven[14].

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[4]David Evans, "NFL Beer and Hot Dog Prices 2026: Every Stadium Ranked Cheapest to Priciest," *Sportscasting*, 2026, https://www.sportscasting.com/news/nfl-beer-hot-dog-prices-2026-every-stadium-ranked/.

[5] Daniel Mader, "Bills New Stadium Details: Inside the Cost, Capacity and More about Buffalo's $2.2 Billion Home," *Sporting News*, September 16, 2026, via Yahoo Sports, https://sports.yahoo.com/articles/bills-stadium-details-inside-cost-070002757.html

[6]NYC Independent Budget Office, Public Investment and Subsidies for New York City Major League Sports Facilities, March 29, 2023, https://www.ibo.nyc.gov/assets/ibo/downloads/pdf/economy-and-employment/2023/2023-march-description-of-public-subsidies-for-madison-square-garden-yankee-stadium-citi-field-and-barclays-center.pdf

[7]Stephen Bradley, "New Report: NYC Is the First Major City to Cross $9 Threshold for a Pint of Beer," *VinePair*, April 7, 2026, https://vinepair.com/booze-news/new-report-names-new-york-most-expensive-beer-city/.

[8] Charles V. Bagli, "So Many Seats, So Many Tax Breaks," New York Times, July 11, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/11/nyregion/stadiums-arenas-funding-nyc.html.

[9]"The Price of a Pint of Beer in 20 Major U.S. Cities," *American Craft Beer*, April 10, 2026, https://www.americancraftbeer.com/the-price-of-a-pint-of-beer-in-20-major-u-s-cities/.

[10] Neil deMause, "Cuomo's Gift to Islanders Could Be Worth Nine Figures," *The Village Voice*, March 5, 2018, https://www.villagevoice.com/cuomos-gift-to-islanders-could-be-worth-nine-figures/

[11]Erik Lazo, "The Costs of New York's Stadiums," City & State New York, December 1, 2022, https://www.cityandstateny.com/policy/2022/12/costs-new-yorks-stadiums/380359/.

[12]Alaina Turnquist, "Public Investment and Subsidies for New York City Major League Sports Facilities," memorandum to Sarah Stefanski, New York City Independent Budget Office, March 29, 2023, enclosed in Louisa Chafee to Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal, March 29, 2023, https://www.ibo.nyc.gov/assets/ibo/downloads/pdf/economy-and-employment/2023/2023-march-description-of-public-subsidies-for-madison-square-garden-yankee-stadium-citi-field-and-barclays-center.pdf

[13] u/CarltheHuman, "2026 Beer and Liquor Prices at Citi Field," Reddit, r/NewYorkMets, March 28, 2026, https://www.reddit.com/r/NewYorkMets/comments/1s6kccz/2026_beer_and_liquor_prices_at_citi_field/.

[14] "Coors Light 24oz Can," 7NOW (7-Eleven), accessed November 3, 2026, https://www.7now.com/product/102585-0-1/coors-light-24oz-can.

- Yankees Stadium received around $528 million in city, state, and MTA subsidies[15]. A hot dog that costs $4 from a city-approved street cart[16] outside the stadium costs $7.39[17] once fans go through security.

How did it get this way? First, it's impossible to ignore the impact monopolies and consolidated markets have on live event concessions. Every major sports league enjoys an antitrust exemption that they have abused for decades all while fleecing fans for every penny they can. Stadium and team owners use a highly consolidated food distribution chain, which leads to higher prices and less options for fans. And, even the monopoly Live Nation/Ticketmaster gets in on the action by only selling Liquid Death water to be sold at the venues they operate because they have an equity stake in the brand.

These companies take advantage of the fact that once a fan enters an arena, they become the perfect target for prices that would never survive competition on the outside. This kind of markup lacks any justification, it simply represents greed. One fan said it best, "When you need a law to stop someone from charging 18 dollars for a beer that is not a pricing problem that is a monopoly wearing a jersey."[18]

The good news is there is an easy solution that benefits both fans and business. In 2017, the Falcons voluntarily introduced the "fan-first pricing" model at the Mercedes-Benz stadium to provide fans with affordable menu options, which include a hot dog for $2 and a domestic beer for $5. Not only were fans happier but business improved. Thousands more fans entered the stadium earlier which reduced congestion and increased revenues for both concession and merchandise sales.[19]

New Yorkers deserve a fan-first pricing policy and we encourage you to pass legislation that creates fan-first menus at concession stands, especially in those venues that receive taxpayer benefits.

Thank you, I am happy to answer any questions.

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[15]NYC Independent Budget Office estimate, supra note 5.
[16]New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, "Approved Pushcart Vendor Prices," NYC Parks, accessed November 3, 2026, https://www.nycgovparks.org/opportunities/concessions/pushcart-prices
[17]Angel Roman, photograph of concession menu board at Yankee Stadium, Google Maps, September 2026, https://maps.app.goo.gl/T9gNYPtA6uomFPig9.
[18]Jay Feldman (@leadgen), comment on Business Insider (@businessinsider), Instagram Reel, July 28th, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/reel/DbV1buUln6Y/.
[19] Ken Belson, "In Atlanta, Concessions Prices Go Down and Revenue Goes Up," *New York Times*, January 25, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/25/sports/football/nfl-concessions.