



March 24, 2011

To: Rep. Phil Barnhart and Rep. Vicki Berger, Co-Chairs  
House Revenue Committee

From: Jason Parks, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

Re: HB 2110, HB 2231, HB 2533 – Increase cigarette taxes

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy partner of the American Cancer Society, supports evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. As such, we support significantly increasing the tax on cigarettes and other tobacco products in Oregon.

From a health impact perspective, increasing tobacco excise taxes on cigarettes is one of the most cost-effective strategies to reduce tobacco use among adults and to prevent youth from starting. Studies show that a ten percent increase in the price of cigarettes decreases youth smoking prevalence by 7 percent and overall cigarette consumption by 4 percent.

Further, low-income populations are four times more likely to quit smoking in response to cigarette price increases. Because these particular populations bear a disproportionate burden of death and disease caused by tobacco, they would obtain substantial health benefits from quitting. Further, low-income and minority youth are less likely to start smoking as a result of a cigarette price increase than other youth.

All of the bills under consideration today (HB 2110, HB 2231 and HB 2533) would raise the tax enough to make a positive impact on the health of Oregonians and we support them on that basis.

ACS CAN supports taxing all products at an equitable rate. This approach prevents one product from being relatively less expensive than other products which may make the less expensive product more attractive to youth. To the extent that the bills under consideration today meet this goal we are supportive.

Significant tobacco excise tax increases can provide revenues to the state which is predictable and allows policy makers to effectively budget.

ACS CAN also supports policy that directs a significant portion of the revenues to cessation and prevention programs that follow Centers for Disease Control (CDC) best

practices. To the extent that these bills do provide money for cessation and prevention we are even more supportive.

Realization of the full health and revenue impacts requires a "floor tax" on products on hand at the time the tax increase takes effect. All of these bills contain that provision and we are supportive of that provision as well.

We ask that you support policies which significantly increase the price of tobacco, protect the health of Oregonians and also provide tools to help those who want to quit, quit.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this issue.

Sincerely,

Jason Parks  
Oregon Director of Government Relations  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network



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