



MEASURE: HB 2008
EXHIBIT: 2
H BUSINESS & LABOR
DATE: 3-20-2013 PAGES: 1
SUBMITTED BY: Speaker Kotek

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2008
House Committee on Business and Labor

State Representative Tina Kotek
March 20, 2013

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 2008. I have the pleasure of sponsoring this bill on behalf of the Hayden Island Neighborhood Network. This bill is a product of several sessions of work and many conversations with my constituents about how problem liquor establishments can negatively affect public safety and community livability.

In my district in North Portland, there is an area on Hayden Island that has a concentration of 12 liquor-licensed establishments in a strip mall that is commonly called "Lottery Row." This area has experienced a growth in crime that has grown proportionally to the proliferation of liquor-licensed establishments over the past five years. While the island community as a whole has experienced less crime over the past few years, the crime rate at these establishments has increased by over 45% since 2007, which is when many of these retail contracts began to be issued.

In late 2011, there was a gang-related shooting at one of the establishments in Lottery Row, and I have heard many concerns from neighbors on the island that they are worried it will happen again. Time and again, we have seen occurrences where an establishment has a history of violence, evidence of a relationship to gang activity, and other egregious crimes and these problems aren't addressed immediately or effectively. House Bill 2008 provides specific tools to address these problems appropriately.

House Bill 2008 does three things: First, it would give local governments the ability to suspend a liquor license for up to 72 hours if a serious incident related to the service of alcohol at the premise occurs and the continuation of operations is an immediate threat to public safety. Second, the bill would provide the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) with clearly-defined authority to work with a problem licensee before canceling a license. Finally, the bill would require that one of the five members of the Commission have expertise in public safety. This last provision will balance the current designation of an industry representative on the commission to better meet the mandate of the OLCC to address the needs of both the industry and the community.

Most liquor establishments in Oregon are good citizens. This bill will make it easier for these businesses to operate without being impacted by the bad reputations – and the potential dangers – of problem establishments in their area.

This bill is important to my district, but I know that it applies to each of your districts, too. Every city in Oregon has problem establishments, bars or taverns that everyone in the community could identify as a threat to public safety and community livability. We all know them, we all see them, and with this bill, we can better address them. Thank you.