



HB 3403 Healthy Vending
Hearing testimony
Friday April 5th, 2013
House Health Care Committee

Greetings Chair Greenlick, members of the Committee. My name is Nancy Becker. I live in Portland and I work at Oregon Public Health Institute.

I am speaking in support of Healthy Vending for Government buildings, HB 3403.

As a dietitian I know how hard it is for all of us to use self control when high calorie sugary drinks and snacks are right there in front of us. We all get hungry in the middle of the workday and want a little snack; vending machines in public buildings provide us with the chance to act upon our urges. Vending machines are packed with foods that contribute to the obesity epidemic, which costs Oregon taxpayers over 6 billion dollars in health care costs.

It doesn't have to be this way! We could have a state where everyone is healthy and well and health care costs of government workers have stopped their perpetual increases. Government subsidized vending machines in government buildings could be part of the solution, making it easier for public employees to lead healthier lifestyles.

Public employees in PEBB are in the HEM and they are trying to make the kinds of dietary changes that healthier vending would enable. Visitors to public buildings don't have to be assaulted with banks of vending machines that tempt them. Both visitors and employees could look at vending machines and see a reflection of the values that govern our state: health, vibrancy, conservation of our resources and support for our public staff.

Workers want healthier vending products. In a recent SEIU survey of 25,000 union members, 76% of the responders stated that they were in favor of rules for vending machines. All over the state public employees have asked for healthier products only be stonewalled, confused, and misled about the availability of healthier items. They've used work time to plead with vendors for healthier items as you have heard, yet they have met with resistance and roadblocks.

What about the products? The snack industry has responded to increased demand for healthy vending items with the introduction of 100s if not 1000s of new products, both food and beverages that would meet the proposed standards. I have some examples here. The snack food industry knows that this is the growth area of their merchandise, and has responded with marvelous products that are healthy and appealing. Some are even made in Oregon! These products sell, and sell well. We know that schools have implemented nutrition standards and their vending operations are doing fine. Several venues around the country have stocked their machines completely with healthier items and are also doing fine.

We really want to make this work. I understand that here are some technical issues with the bill and I want to assure you, that we are open to discussions and will work hard to make this work so that all parties are satisfied.

Nutrition standards for vending machines is a win-win proposition. Workers and clients get better food to choose from, vendors get guidance and technical expertise to determine what products are suitable, their business thrives, and the State of Oregon once again leads the nation in prevention and lowering health care costs.

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