



Department of County Human Services

MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON

Mental Health and Addiction Services Division

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To: Rep. Margaret Doherty, Chair
Rep. Brent Barton, Vice Chair
Rep. Bill Kennemer, Vice Chair
Members of the House Business and Labor Committee

Multnomah County supports HB 2702. This bill grants the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) the authority to create and implement “alcohol impact areas” (AIAs) that limit sales of certain alcoholic beverages in defined geographical areas.

Preventing and reducing the harm caused by alcohol consumption and addiction requires a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach, including coordinated prevention, treatment, and healthcare services. Research shows that the environment that people live in influences alcohol use patterns and health outcomes. This bill provides cities and counties with a powerful tool to create a healthy environment and to address local alcohol-related public safety hazards by limiting the sale of low-price, high-alcohol content beverages that are a source of problem drinking.

AIAs have proven effective in mitigating alcohol-related problems where they have been adopted. For example, Tacoma, WA saw a 35 percent decrease in Emergency Medical Service incidents and a 61 percent decrease in “Liquor in the Park” police service calls in the year following implementation of their AIA. Seattle saw a 9 percent decrease in Sobering Unit Van pick-ups and a 15 percent decrease in adult liquor violations in the two years following the implementation of their AIAs.

Inexpensive, high alcohol content beverages are most popular with young adults and street drinkers. Risky drinking among young adults contributes to increased violence and sexual violence, difficulties in work and school, and to the three leading causes of death for young people: accidental injuries, suicide, and homicide. Street drinking is associated with increased disorderly behavior, property damage, and a depleted sense of public safety. Increasing price and reducing availability are effective strategies for reducing consumption among young adults and reducing consequences associated with street drinking.

Multnomah County frequently partners with treatment and social service providers serving vulnerable populations. Sales of inexpensive and high alcohol content beverages are often concentrated near recovery housing and service providers. The presence of such beverages impede Multnomah County’s goal to create a better quality of life for our community’s most vulnerable people.

In summary, Multnomah County supports this bill because:



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- It provides local jurisdictions a powerful tool to address local public safety issues;
- It provides the opportunity to reduce access to alcohol products known to be harmful to the community;
- It allows cities to create positive norms that support health for all including, youth and vulnerable populations.

Thank you for considering this important legislation.

Respectfully,

Devarshi Bajpai, Manager of Addiction Services
Multnomah County's Department of County Human Services