

March 4, 2013

To: Members of the Business and Labor Committee

Re: HB 2885

Metro Area Coalitions (MAC) is a coalition of 14 active substance abuse prevention coalitions in the Portland metro area working together to reduce underage drinking and substance abuse. MAC and its over 1,000 coalition members including residents, youth, parents, schools, law enforcement, businesses, government representatives, and health professionals, represent diverse communities in the metro area. The coalitions that belong to MAC are connected by their use of prevention science and research-based strategies that are effective in reducing youth substance abuse rates.

MAC strongly supports HB 2885 which establishes a fee surcharge for full on-premise sales, limited on-premise sales and off-premises sales licenses for alcoholic beverages and dedicates fees collected for public safety efforts in cities and counties.

As prevention professionals, we know effective prevention work requires a multi-dimensional and collaborative approach that involves conducting education and health promotion, increasing access to preventative health and treatment services, reducing access to harmful substances, and creating healthy environments. We partner with schools, families and service providers to accomplish our collective goals of reducing youth substance abuse and creating healthy, nurturing environments where young people thrive.

Law enforcement plays an especially important role in creating a safe environment with clear standards for young people. Research shows that consistent, meaningful consequences for youth who violate drinking laws reduce youth's likelihood to drink.

Further, enforcement often serves as an early intervention for young people experimenting with alcohol or substance abuse. Getting in trouble with the law can be a wake-up call and can facilitate a connection to intervention or treatment services as needed.

Even though the connection between youth use and their perception of consistent consequences is well established in research, most communities struggle to adequately fund law enforcement hours, resulting in diminished officer availability to work on underage and risky drinking issues. Many of the youth that we work with report that there are no consequences for underage drinking, believing they are unlikely to be caught.

Yet, underage drinking and risky binge drinking among young adults have serious consequences for our communities. Alcohol contributes to 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.

HB 2885 just makes sense by helping to pay for enforcement by collecting a fee from those who benefit from alcohol sales.

In summary, the Metro Area Coalitions (MAC) supports this bill because:

- It helps fund much needed public safety.
- When there are consistent and reasonable consequences for alcohol violations young people are less likely to drink. HB 2885 allows for more officer time, thus more consistent enforcement.
- This bill acknowledges the cost of alcohol consumption to communities and appropriately seeks modest funding from the source of the problem.

Sincerely,

Sondra Storm,
Metro Area Coalitions (MAC) Representative

MAC Member coalitions independently supporting this bill:

Clackamas County Prevention Coalition
Hillsboro Empowers Youth
Tigard Turns the Tide
Gladstone Youth Coalition
Multnomah County SPF-SIG Project
Tualatin Together
Beaverton Together
East Portland Community Coalition