

March 4, 2013

To: Members of the Business and Labor Committee

Re: HB 2702

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 2702. This bill would grant 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.

As prevention coalition leaders, we work closely with our city and county governments and law enforcement to identify and address alcohol related issues. MAC members believe that AIAs are a powerful tool for local governments to address local conditions that contribute to problem drinking. The OLCC requires that local governments petitioning for an AIA approach businesses to voluntarily address issues, take public comment, document chronic public safety problems, and explain how an AIA would alleviate the documented problems. This process ensures that the community including businesses and residents are engaged in identifying problems and finding solutions.

As prevention professionals, we understand that the environment people live in has a significant impact on alcohol consumption and related consequences. Highly visible sales of cheap, high alcohol content beverages and the street drinking and public intoxication associated with these products contribute to unhealthy norms and diminish residents' feelings of safety. Research indicates a positive correlation between availability of alcohol and negative community consequences including higher rates of crime, violence, and disease. AIAs can be used to establish positive, healthy norms and prevent over-saturation of alcohol sales, particularly cheap, high alcohol content beverages associated with harm.

Inexpensive, high alcohol content beverages are popular with youth and young adults. Underage and 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. Increasing price and reducing availability are effective strategies for reducing consumption among youth and young adults.

In summary, Metro Area Coalitions (MAC) supports HB 2702 because:

- It empowers local governments to engage their communities in finding solutions to alcohol-related problems
- Allows communities to establish positive norms that support health for all including, youth and vulnerable populations.
- Provides communities with a tool to reduce access to alcohol products known to be harmful to the community

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