

AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION®

OF THE MOUNTAIN PACIFIC

Serving Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming

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March 12, 2013

To: Chair Barnhart & Vice-Chairs Bailey & Berger
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From: Colleen Hermann-Franzen, Advocacy & Communications Manager
Re: HB 2275, Increases cigarette tax

On behalf of the American Lung Association of the Mountain Pacific, serving Oregon, we would like to share our support of House Bill 2275. We thank Representative Greenlick for his leadership and helping to further our mission of saving lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease.

Increasing tobacco taxes are important for public health. Increasing the price of tobacco is a proven way to deter more children and teens from starting to smoke and it reduces smoking rates for everyone. Studies have shown that a 10 percent increase in the price of cigarettes reduces consumption by about 7 percent for youth and 3-5 percent for adults.ⁱ Oregon's adult smoking rate is currently 19.6 percent and 11.5 percent of high school students smoke.ⁱⁱ

A 2007 report released by the respected Institute of Medicine entitled *Ending the Tobacco Problem: A Blueprint for the Nation* recommended increasing taxes as an effective tool to reduce tobacco use. Specific recommendations included increasing cigarette taxes to at least \$2.00 per pack, and linking cigarette taxes to inflation.ⁱⁱⁱ

Oregon is below the national average for tobacco taxes. According to the American Lung Association's 2013 *State of Tobacco Control Report*, Oregon ranks 29th in the country for our level of tobacco taxes, at \$1.18 per pack. Because of this, we get a "D" grade from the Lung Association for our tobacco tax levels.^{iv}

This is substantially below the nationwide average state cigarette tax, which as of March 1, 2013 stands at \$1.49 per pack. This is important because we aren't maximizing the economic benefits Oregon could receive from higher taxes, such as raising revenue to help fund our tobacco prevention and education program.

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Let's work to bring down smoking rates in Oregon and pass House Bill 2275.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

With Highest Regards,
Colleen Hermann-Franzen

ⁱ Tauras JA, O'Malley PM, Johnston LD, "Effects of Price and Access Laws on Teenage Smoking Initiation: A National Longitudinal Analysis," Bridging the Gap Research, ImpacTeen, April 2001. Available at: http://www.impactteen.org/generalarea_PDFs/AccessLaws.pdf.

ⁱⁱ American Lung Association. 2013. *State of Tobacco Control 2013* report. Available at: <http://www.stateoftobaccocontrol.org/sotc-2013-report.pdf>.

ⁱⁱⁱ IOM (Institute of Medicine). 2007. *Ending the tobacco problem: A blueprint for the nation*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. Available at: <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2007/Ending-the-Tobacco-Problem-A-Blueprint-for-the-Nation.aspx>.

^{iv} American Lung Association. 2013. *State of Tobacco Control 2013* report. Available at: <http://www.stateoftobaccocontrol.org/sotc-2013-report.pdf>.