



SID LEIKEN

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FROM THE DESK OF
REPRESENTATIVE
JOHN LIVELY

DATE: April 5, 2013
TO: Oregon House of Representatives
RE: Support for HB 2870, relating to local tobacco taxes

As Chair of the Lane County Board of Commissioners, I am today asking you to support HB 2870 A. Here is why my colleagues and I decided to lend our support to this measure:

- Tobacco pricing is the best way to limit access to these addicting products. Helping people free themselves of this addiction puts more money into their pockets. It will further reduce health care costs and boost productivity of our economy.
- Pre-emptions in general limit decision making at the local level. Lane County is in a partnership with Oregon to deliver public health and mental health services and Lane County has contributed General Fund dollars for these mandated services for years. As our General Fund shrinks, this may become a necessary tool for us to hold up our end of the bargain.
- Lane County is a primary health care providers for low income insured and uninsured residents. Our clients use tobacco products at twice the rate of the general population, and the habit definitely impacts the costs we incur in terms of the health needs we address each and every day.
- Lane County's low permanent tax rate stems from our historic abundance of federal timber revenue. In the past six years, that revenue has decreased by just over \$30 million dollars that was previously earmarked for public safety, public roads, public schools, public health, mental health, elections, assessment and taxation, public records...you get the picture. In that same time period, while the Legislature debated and passed a number of "county assistance" bills, most of them have actually addressed how to more easily allow the state to assume county functions...HB 2870 gives us an actual revenue tool.

Your vote today, either up or down, is appreciated. I want to acknowledge your difficult job and thank you for taking time out of your life to provide service to your fellow Oregonians.