



Vote "YES" on HB 2870 A-Engrossed

The Oregon Nurses Association urges you to vote "YES" on HB 2870 A-Engrossed, which would give counties the option of taxing tobacco products in order to generate revenue and deter people from using tobacco products. Counties that choose to levy a tobacco tax would be required to dedicate at least 40 percent of the revenue generated to public and mental health.

Tobacco use is widely known to cause heart disease, diabetes, asthma, and cancer, and those who use tobacco often face a lifetime of health consequences. Every day, Oregon nurses see the impact of tobacco use in their patients, and work to prevent patients from starting to smoke, and to help those who smoke quit.

The most effective way to ensure someone does not smoke or use tobacco is to prevent them from starting. The younger a person is when they begin smoking, the greater his or her chances are of ultimately becoming a lifelong tobacco user. This makes prevention especially important for Oregon's youth. Research shows that smoking at an early age increases the risk of developing lung cancer or experiencing other chronic health problems in adulthood due to nicotine addiction.¹

Increasing the price of cigarettes and tobacco products can be a significant deterrent for youth—who are often most sensitive to price—to start smoking, increasing the odds that they will stay smoke-free. The revenue raised by a county tobacco tax can help fund vital public health services such as tobacco prevention and cessation programs.

Counties around the state struggle to fund public health and other services, and allowing them to raise revenue, while simultaneously limiting youth access to a harmful product is a win-win.

For these reasons, the Oregon Nurses Association urges you to vote "YES" on HB 2870 A.

¹ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids Factsheet, *The Path to Smoking Addiction Starts at Very Young Ages*, <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0127.pdf>.

From the desk of:
Rep Ben Uyey