



## Deborah Kafoury Multnomah County Chair

501 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Suite 600  
Portland, Oregon 97214  
Phone: (503) 988-3308  
Email: [mult.chair@multco.us](mailto:mult.chair@multco.us)

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Dear Chair Greenlick and members of the House Committee on Health Care:

I commend you for your dedication and determination in addressing the regulation of vapor products in our community. The County shares your deep concern about these unregulated products which are growing in popularity and increasing in use in our community. For this reason, the County supports House Bill 2546 which would define “inhalant delivery system” and amend existing tobacco laws, resulting in a ban on the sale of electronic cigarettes to minors, a prohibition against youth possessing them and the inclusion of electronic cigarettes in the Oregon Indoor Clean Air Act.

I am particularly concerned about these unregulated products and their appeal to youth. These products are being packaged, advertised and marketed in ways that are particularly appealing to young people. These products are completely unregulated and there is little research on the long-term effects on human health. House Bill 2546 will help protect our youth from accessing and using these products.

Data of concern include:

- From January through July of 2014, the Oregon Poison Center received 54 calls related to human exposure to nicotine from e-cigarettes, compared to fewer than 40 for the prior three years combined. In fact, more than one-third of the e-cigarette calls to the Poison Center were made about exposures occurring to children under five years of age.
- E-cigarettes contain nicotine. It is a psychoactive drug that acts in the brain and throughout the body and rapidly produces physical dependence characterized by withdrawal symptoms.
- The FDA has analyzed samples of e-cigarettes and has found carcinogens, and detectable levels of other toxic chemicals. In addition, they have analyzed samples of e-cigarettes marketed as “nicotine free” and found that they actually do contain nicotine.
- Youth are very aware of e-cigarettes and many perceive them as less harmful than regular cigarettes. In Multnomah County, more than half (55.1%) of the high school students perceived e-cigarettes as less harmful than regular cigarettes (CPPW YRBS, 2012).

- Current use of e-cigarettes (i.e., in the last month) among Oregon eleventh-graders has almost tripled recently: from 1.8% in 2011 to 5.2% in 2013.
- Cigarette smoking is down in Oregon 57 percent among 11th graders and 74 percent among 8th graders since 1996. Yet, the use of e-cigarettes by teens and adults is on the rise, potentially creating new addictions to nicotine among our youth, deepening the addiction for current smokers, and renewing addiction for former smokers.
- E-cigarettes are advertised in child-friendly flavors, such as strawberry, chocolate, cotton candy, captain crunch and mint, and in packaging and smaller sizes that appeal to young people.

I am deeply troubled by these unregulated products. This bill will promote an environment that discourages their use.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration on this very important legislation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah Kafoury". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deborah Kafoury  
Chair