

February 9th 2015
Testimony to the House Committee on Health Care
Support of HB 2546

Chair Greenlick, Vice-Chairs Hayden and Nosse, and Members of the House Health Care Committee:

The Coalition of Local Health Officials represents the 34 local public health departments in Oregon who work tirelessly to protect the public and prevent death and disease. The Coalition of Local Health Officials supports HB2546, which would regulate e-cigarettes by prohibiting access to children under 18 and also ban the use of these products in public places.

HB 2546 defines Inhalant Delivery Systems, (commonly referred to as e-cigarettes) as the device used to deliver nicotine, or cannabinoids, and the components sold for the purpose of being vaporized or aerosolized (commonly referred to as e-juice).

E-cigarettes are unregulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Absent this federal regulation the current landscape of e-cigarettes— including product design and availability, sales, marketing, and use— is one of rapid change and high variability. Significant questions remain regarding the safety and impact of e-cigarettes on patterns of conventional tobacco use.

The FDA analyzed samples of e-cigarettes and found that they contained nicotine even though they were labeled as “nicotine-free.” Studies have also found a 20 percent degradation of indoor air quality during the use of e-cigarettes.¹ Emerging research has shown that e-cigarettes do not simply emit water vapor, but a concoction of chemicals toxic to humans. Some studies found that secondhand e-cigarette aerosol contains nicotine, particulate matter, and known carcinogens.^{2 3} What is more, people passively exposed to e-cigarette aerosol absorb nicotine at levels comparable to passive smokers.⁴

E-cigarettes are also used as delivery devices for other drugs. For example, hash oil is now commercially available for use in e-cigarettes in Washington and Colorado. Ballot Measure 91 prohibits the use of marijuana indoors, however, it will be challenging for law enforcement to determine what substances are in the inhalant delivery systems. HB 2546 would ban the use of e-cigarettes for all substances, thereby eliminating the potential for confusion.

Lastly, clean air— free of smoke, aerosol, and vapor— should remain the standard to protect the health of bystanders, prevent tobacco and nicotine use initiation among children and youth, and encourage complete smoking cessation.

The Coalition of Local Health Officials urges you to support this important bill.

¹ Promoting Health and Preventing Disease and Injury through Workplace Tobacco Polices. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

² Legacy Foundation. 2014. Tobacco Factsheet

³ World Health Organization. 2014. Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems Report.

⁴ Flouris, A.D., et al. Acute impact of active and passive electronic cigarette smoking on serum cotinine and lung function. *Inhal Toxicol.* 2013. 25(2): p. 91-101

