



February 25, 2015

House Committee on Revenue  
c/o Representative Phil Barnhart, Chair  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street, N.E.  
Salem, Oregon 97301

**RE: HB 2555 relating to tax on cigarettes**

Dear Chair Barnhart and Committee Members:

Thank you for hearing Representative Greenlick's bill HB 2555 and inviting testimony from the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN).

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society. We support evidence based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate tobacco related cancer as a major health problem.

ACS CAN supports regular and significant increases in cigarette taxes to deter the purchase of cigarettes and other tobacco products. There is a direct correlation among a buyer's purchasing power and the cost of tobacco products as a determinant to product use.

ACS CAN also advocates for the funds raised from cigarette taxes be directed to meaningful anti-tobacco education programs that use Center for Disease Control (CDC) best practices. We work closely with the Oregon Health Authority's Public Health Division and believe its tobacco prevention education programs should be further funded to assist in helping those addicted quit and help keep youth from ever starting.

The Facts:

The 2014 Surgeon General's report found that while significant progress has been made in reducing smoking over the last several decades, there is still much more work to be done in reducing death and disease from tobacco use. While smoking has declined, cigarettes have become more deadly and the risk of disease and death caused by smoking has not.

The report revealed that 480,000 Americans die each year from tobacco-related illnesses and tobacco use costs the economy about \$300 billion per year in health care costs and lost productivity. Over the last 50 years, more than 20 million premature deaths have been caused by smoking, including more than 6.5 million preventable cancer deaths.

The study, funded by American Cancer Society and lead by two of its senior researchers, suggests that cigarette smoking may kill as many as 60,000 more people per year from diseases that are not currently linked to smoking.

Published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the study included data from nearly a million U.S. men and women 55 or older enrolled in five U.S. cohort studies. During the approximately 10 years the cohorts were followed, there were over 180,000 deaths.

In particular, smoking was associated with doubling the risk of death from several causes including renal failure, intestinal ischemia, hypertensive heart disease, infections, and various respiratory diseases other than COPD. Excess risk of death from each of these diseases declined after quitting smoking.

The study's authors note that there is strong evidence that smoking is a cause of death from these five diseases, even though they are not currently included in estimates of deaths caused by smoking. Smoking was also linked with smaller increases in risk of death from other causes not formally established as caused by smoking, including breast cancer, prostate cancer, and cancers of unknown site.

In closing, ACS CAN hopes this evidence based information is helpful as the House Committee on Revenue works through HB 2555.

Thank you, again, for hearing HB 2555. ACS CAN supports meaningful tax increases to deter purchase of cigarettes and other tobacco products. We also request the legislature distribute new funding streams to tobacco prevention education programs, so that study findings, like the one previously noted, are the exception.

Best regards,



Troy Rayburn, Director  
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American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network