



## Testimony Supporting HB 2074 and HB 2134

Jenn Baker

Oregon Nurses Association

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Chair Barnhart and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB2074 and HB 2134. The Oregon Nurses Association is proud to represent over 13,000 Oregon Nurses. Oregon Nurses make up the largest segment of Oregon's health care work force, and work in nearly every health care setting imaginable, from large hospitals to small local clinics, from corrections to school based health centers, and community-based public health.

ONA has a long history of working to promote public health through tobacco prevention and cessation efforts. This work has expanded to more broad nicotine prevention and cessation efforts as a result of the increased popularity of electronic cigarettes. Contrary to popular belief, e-cigarettes are **not** emission free. Many questions remain regarding the long-term impact on individuals and the population health.

ONA supports the World Health Organization's recommendation to regulate e-cigarettes the same way traditional cigarettes are regulated, in lieu of proof that e-cigarettes are not harmful to the public. Taxation is a vital piece of tobacco and nicotine prevention, especially youth prevention, as young folks are especially price sensitive. Adequate taxation helps to reduce smoking and saves lives, while also raising revenue that can be used to fund vital health care services and cessation and prevention programs.

Nicotine is an addictive gateway drug. Use of nicotine is shown to be harmful to an individual's brain development, hearth, and arteries. Although Oregon's nurses and other health care providers have demonstrated that they are committed to stressing the importance of smoking cessation—both traditional and e-cigarettes, the most important work we can do around tobacco and nicotine prevention is preventing non tobacco and nicotine users from taking up tobacco or nicotine in the first place, especially our children. The inclusion of e-cigarettes in Oregon's tobacco tax will help to dissuade young Oregonians from using these addictive products and becoming lifelong users.

As direct care providers for many Oregonians who suffer from chronic illness as a result of the use of tobacco and nicotine, and patients struggling to quit smoking, Oregon's nurses urge your support of HB 2074 and HB 2134.