

June 1, 2015



Dear Chair Hass and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 663. My name is Luis Rodriguez, and I am the Grassroots Relations Manager for the state of Oregon with the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN). ACS CAN is the nonpartisan sister advocacy organization to the American Cancer Society that supports evidence based policies to diminish suffering from cancer.

I would like to express our opposition to the Indoor Clean Air Act exemption in SB 663 and the –A12 amendment proposed, specifically because of sections that would preempt county and city governments from adopting additional local retail standards. We feel that if adopted, these provisions have the potential to significantly harm long-term tobacco control strategies in communities across the state.

Preemption is Bad for Public Health

According to data produced by the Oregon Health Authority, smoking rates among adults and youth in Oregon counties vary significantly, in some comparisons by more than 20%. Preempting cities and counties from taking additional action to address the retail environment would eliminate an important tool for local governments to combat tobacco and protect the health of their communities. Additionally, city and county governments often create innovative and effective solutions to address tobacco use and frequently serve as models for statewide tobacco control efforts. Preempting city and county governments from exploring additional retail standards could thus weaken future state policies to address tobacco use and improve public health.

No Exemptions to Indoor Clean Air Act

ACS CAN opposes any carve outs created for businesses engaged primarily in selling electronic smoking devices, which includes exemptions to the Indoor Clean Air Act or the allowance of sampling. There is no question that nicotine is addictive, and permitting sampling of an addictive product prior to purchase is both dangerous and counterintuitive to protecting public health in Oregon. Additionally, the Indoor Clean Air Act serves to protect the health of patrons and workers. Creating an exemption for businesses engaged primarily in the sale of electronic smoking devices would undermine the intent of the law and potentially put workers in a position where they have to choose between a job or their health. These exemptions only serve to normalize smoking behavior and undermine efforts to protect public health.

In summary, ACS CAN opposed the –A12 amendment and urges the removal of the exemption to the Indoor Clean Air Act for businesses engaged primarily in the sale of electronic smoking devices.

Sincerely,

Luis Rodriguez
Oregon Grassroots Relations Manager