

COALITION OF LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIALS

March 21, 2017

Chair Barnhart and Members of the Revenue Committee:

For the record my name is Morgan Cowling and I am the Executive Director of the Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials (CLHO). I work with and on behalf of the 34 local public health departments in Oregon. Oregon's local health departments work to prevent youth initiation of tobacco through local prevention strategies as part of the statewide Tobacco Prevention and Education Program. The CLHO supports HB 3178, a tax on inhalant delivery systems.

Oregon must do more to prevent youth from getting addicted to nicotine products including e-cigarettes. There are three important points we'd like to add to this discussion.

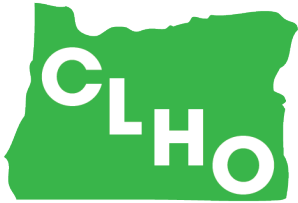
1. Oregon and the Federal Government currently tax every other non-FDA approved nicotine product. The lack of state or federal taxation is a policy choice and Oregon is currently choosing to make these products significantly less expensive than other tobacco products.
2. Youth use of e-cigarette products has grown significantly as these products grow in popularity. Youth use in Oregon was reported at 17.1 percent in 2015, which is on the rise, up from 1.8 percent just four years earlier, in 2011.

Last week during the tobacco tax hearings there were conversations about harm reduction. I want to quote former CDC- Director Tom Frieden, "We want parents to know that nicotine is dangerous for kids at any age, whether it's an e-cigarette, hookah, cigarette or cigar," He went on to say that "**Adolescence is a critical time for brain development. Nicotine exposure at a young age may cause lasting harm to brain development, promote addiction, and lead to sustained tobacco use.**"



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3. The Food and Drug Administration began to take steps to regulate e-cigarettes like tobacco products in a “deeming” rule promulgated in 2016.<sup>i</sup> In the release of the rule they stipulated, “The FDA believes that this new technology has both potential benefits and risks. If certain products, such as e-cigarettes, have reduced toxicity compared to conventional cigarettes; encourage current smokers to switch completely; and/or are not widely used by youth, they may have the potential to reduce disease and death. But if any product prompts young people to become addicted to nicotine, reduces a person’s interest in quitting cigarettes, and/or leads to long-term usage with other tobacco products, the public health impact could be negative.”

Until we know with certainty that these products have reduced toxicity, get people off tobacco completely and do not encourage a new generation of nicotine addiction we must treat them like other tobacco products and tax them at a level that at the very least discourages youth use.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We urge your support of enacting an e-cigarette tax this session at a rate high enough to reduce the increasing youth use of these products.

Morgan D. Cowling, MPA  
Executive Director  
Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials

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<sup>i</sup> Federal Register. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/05/10/2016-10685/deeming-tobacco-products-to-be-subject-to-the-federal-food-drug-and-cosmetic-act-as-amended-by-the>



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