



## Testimony in Support of HB 3296

Catie Theisen

Oregon Nurses Association

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Chair Barnhart and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of taxing all nicotine and tobacco products. The Oregon Nurses Association is proud to represent nearly 15,000 Oregon Nurses, working in settings from large hospitals to small local clinics, and corrections, school based health centers and community-based public health.

ONA members recognize the significant health and economic costs of tobacco and nicotine use and have long advocated for evidence based policies to prevent youth from using tobacco and nicotine. In other tobacco and nicotine products we know that increasing the price of tobacco through significantly higher tobacco taxes is one of the most successful ways to keep youth from using tobacco and help adults quit. Increases in tobacco and nicotine product taxes ultimately saves lives and lessens health care costs. Extensive health and economic research has concluded that a high-impact cigarette tax reduces both adult and underage smoking.

Nurses see the importance of taxing all tobacco and nicotine products, including ingestible nicotine products at their broadest capacity. No one nicotine product should be significantly more affordable than any other nicotine product.

The Oregon Health Authority has found that non-cigarette tobacco use is 80% higher than traditional cigarette use for 11<sup>th</sup> graders in Oregon<sup>1</sup> and youths who use electronic cigarettes are almost twice as likely to have intentions to smoke conventional cigarettes as those who had never used electronic cigarettes.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, we should not be incentivizing the use of other nicotine products instead of working to curb all tobacco and nicotine use across the board. Raising the price is the most effective intervention available to minimize tobacco and nicotine use.<sup>3</sup>

As direct care providers for many Oregonians who suffer from chronic illness as a result of tobacco and nicotine use, **Oregon's nurses urge your support of taxing all nicotine products as outlined in HB 3296.**

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<sup>1</sup> OHA Tobacco Fact Sheet 2014

<sup>2</sup> National Youth Tobacco Survey. 2013. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, The Health Consequences of Smoking: 50 Years of Progress. A Report of the Surgeon General, 2014.