

Health Department

May 11, 2017

House Committee on Revenue
900 Court St. NE - HR A
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: HB 2056 - Tobacco Taxes

Chair Barnhart and members of the committee: I am Rachael Banks, Interim Public Health Director for Multnomah County Health Department. Thank you for the opportunity today to speak in support of House Bill 2056 with the -2 amendment, repealing preemption on local jurisdictions implementing a cigarette and/or tobacco tax.

Multnomah County supports any increases in tobacco taxes because significant increases in the price of tobacco products has been demonstrated to be the single most impactful and cost effective intervention for reducing tobacco use, particularly among the young and the poor.¹ It is estimated that every 10 percent increase in cigarette prices reduces youth smoking up to seven percent, and total cigarette consumption up to four percent.^{2 3} We support the -2 amendment because we would welcome the ability to raise taxes locally.

While it would be optimal for the health of ALL Oregonians to raise taxes statewide, that is not always feasible to do. Local jurisdictions need all the tools available to them to address the impact of tobacco use in their communities.

This is why Multnomah County supports the ability for local jurisdictions to enact additional requirements for local tobacco control beyond those required by state and federal law, including tobacco taxes. Local control allows for a more agile response to community needs. Also important, local control means local elected officials can determine the policies best suited to address the ongoing epidemic of tobacco use and associated health impacts in their community.

In the absence of statewide legislation, it was critical that Multnomah County had the ability to adopt a local tobacco retail licensing program in 2015 in order to address the high number of retailers who were illegally selling tobacco to our youth. Having the ability to act at the local level allowed us to create a program tailored to our community in the absence of a program at the state level.

¹ World Health Organization (2011). WHO Technical Manual on Tobacco Tax Administration. Geneva, Switzerland.

² U.S. National Cancer Institute and World Health Organization. The Economics of Tobacco and Tobacco Control. National Cancer Institute Tobacco Control Monograph 21. NIH Publication No. 16-CA-8029A. Bethesda, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute; and Geneva, CH: World Health Organization; 2016.

³ IARC Handbooks of Cancer Prevention, Tobacco Control, Vol.14: Effectiveness of Tax and Price Policies for Tobacco Control (2011:Lyon, France)

We appreciate your dedication to this very important issue and want to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. I am happy to take any questions and comments you may have.

Rachael Banks
Interim Public Health Director
Multnomah County Health Department