



May 11, 2017

Chairman Barnhart and members of the Committee:

My name is Christy Inskip. I am a senior community health analyst for Lane County Health & Human Services. Lane County has submitted written testimony in support of HB 2056 -2 on OLIS. Our children have the right to grow up in a community where they can live healthy, prosperous, lives free of addiction.

Vaping and the use of inhalant delivery systems has risen at an alarming rate in Lane County – over 450% among our 11th graders in only two years. Youth use of other tobacco products is also increasing. This is in line with research demonstrating that vaping is leading youth to use other tobacco products. Members of the Cottage Grove Youth Advisory Council told me that tobacco and vaping is an issue at their schools among their peers. Local parents told me their teens said “vaping is just water vapor – it’s harmless.” A local youth told me that if these products cost more, they wouldn’t use them. Another youth said that they needed their nicotine fix and didn’t have enough money to buy a pack of cigarettes, but they had enough change in their pocket to buy a little single cigarillo for 89 cents, so that’s what they did. These anecdotes are consistent with the data and research.

Many of the youth who use nicotine products acquire a lifelong, debilitating and deadly addiction, going on to contribute to the nearly \$260 million we’re currently spending every year in Lane County on tobacco-related medical costs and lost productivity due to early deaths. Tobacco and inhalant products are cheap, which makes them accessible for youth. For every 10% rise in the price of cigarettes, youth cigarette use drops by 6%, and total cigarette use drops by 4%. Raising the price of tobacco has been proven as one of the most effective methods of preventing youth from starting and helping people quit.

In Lane County, we have collaborated with our local CCO, hospital system, United Way, and other community partners to conduct a shared Community Health Needs Assessment and develop a shared Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Addressing the youth drivers of tobacco use is a CHIP priority. We are continuing to implement actions that reduce youth access to tobacco products.

We were the first county to require a license to sell tobacco and restrict retailers from 1,000 feet of schools, and we were the first to increase the legal purchase age for tobacco and nicotine products to 21 years of age. This established regulatory framework prepares Lane County to relatively easily establish a local taxing structure.

We would use the tax revenue to continue the evidence-based work we are already doing. A Lane County survey showed that 76% of the constituents surveyed support raising tobacco taxes if the revenue goes to fund tobacco prevention. Lane County residents are well aware of the actions taken by the Board of Commissioners acting in their capacity as the Local Board of Health and continue to support their work in this area.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.