



COALITION OF LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIALS

May 15, 2017

Chair Greenlick and Members of the House Health Care Committee:

My name is Morgan Cowling and I am the Executive Director of the Coalition of Local Health Officials representing the 34 local public health departments who work every day to promote health and prevent the spread of disease in local communities throughout Oregon. The CLHO would like to encourage you to support SB 235 with the A6 amendment to create a statewide retail license program in Oregon.

This bill comes to you as a product of the last three sessions worth of discussions. Before I tell you about the improvements in this bill from previous sessions I'd like to share the need for this bill. In 2013 Oregon had a serious problem with youth being able to purchase tobacco and had the highest rates of retailers selling to youth in the Country. That year 22.5% of retailers surveyed sold to children, six percentage points above the next state, which put us at risk of losing our block grant.

Since 2013 the Oregon Health Authority and jurisdictions across Oregon have taken action to reduce youth access to cigarettes. In the last three years we've seen Lane County and cities within Lane County, and Multnomah County enact their own local tobacco retail licenses with outreach and education. We've also seen the Oregon Health Authority streamline the Synar and FDA programs into the Public Health Division for better coordination.

While we've made some improvements we know that we can and should be doing more for youth and that is what this amendment enacting statewide licensing would achieve. Better coordination amongst agencies already working to decrease youth consumption and a local community connection to work with retailers. At its core this bill is coordination bill to streamline a process for retailers.

I'd like to tell you about the important elements of the A6 Amendment to create a statewide tobacco retail licensure.

1. One License - This bill is a consolidated license through the Department of Revenue (DOR). DOR would issue licenses to retailers. The Department of Revenue's work to ensure tax compliance would benefit from an accurate list of tobacco and inhalant delivery retailers throughout the state to conduct tax compliance checks.



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Last session there were quite a few questions as to lead agency and which agency and how many agencies. Currently, DOR, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and local public health authorities all have a role in tobacco and e-cigarette prevention and enforcement. The A6 amendments will ensure OHA, DOR and local public health authorities connections, should be seamless for the retailer and build off existing knowledge and expertise.

2. Streamlined enforcement – OHA has consolidated the Synar and FDA and information sharing (written into the bill) between local public health agencies and OHA and DOR would help ensure that retailers would not be checked multiple times by multiple agencies.
3. Self-sustaining Program - The bill limits fees to only cover the costs of the program. Oregon's contract with the FDA has expired. To keep our youth access rates low we will need to find another way to fund education and compliance checks.
4. Local Enforcement - Local public health authorities are uniquely poised to conduct this local community outreach and inspections on the ground across Oregon. Building on the knowledge and expertise to work with local communities will ensure a proactive preventative approach.

Oregon has made great strides over the last three years to decrease youth consumption. However, we cannot lose site of these goals or become compliant. We need to continue to build on the knowledge and expertise in local communities.

Please support the -A6 Amendment to SB235 and move the bill to Ways and Means.



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