



Dear Legislator,

As a County Commissioner, I see firsthand the toll tobacco takes on our community. In the coming months, you will have the opportunity to vote on youth tobacco prevention legislation that could cut all tobacco use in our youth by 25%. **I stand with the Tobacco 21 for Oregon coalition and urge the Oregon legislature to support increasing the minimum legal sales age of tobacco products to 21 years of age.**

The Problem: Tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable death in Oregon.

1,800 Oregon teens become new daily smokers every year. The U.S. Surgeon General reports that adolescents can become dependent on nicotine very rapidly, and at lower levels of consumption than adults, as they are still going through critical periods of brain growth. Tobacco costs Oregonians nearly \$3 billion a year in healthcare costs and lost productivity. Current tobacco use trends point toward 68,000 Oregon kids alive today who will die prematurely from tobacco-related causes.

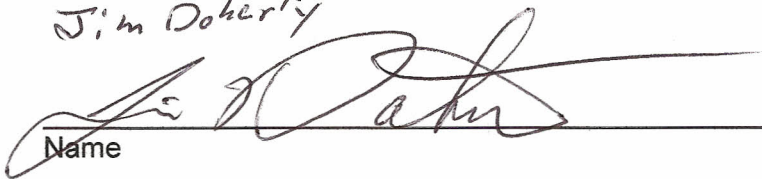
The Solution: Tobacco 21

Research from the Institute of Medicine shows that 95% of smokers begin smoking before they turn 21. The number one source of tobacco for underage youth is social sources. By increasing the Minimum Legal Sales Age (MLSA) to 21, we significantly decrease the availability for underage youth to use friends as a source of tobacco products.

Over 200 cities and counties, as well as the states of Hawaii and California, have already acted to raise the age of tobacco sales. Oregon should be next to take this bold step in protecting the health of our youth and promoting greater public health for all.

Sincerely,

Jim Doherty


Name

Morrow County Commissioner
Oregon County

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