



JAY BOZIEVICH

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DATE: February 7, 2017
TO: Senate Committee on Health Care
RE: Tobacco 21

Chair Monnes Anderson and Members of the Committee:

In my role as a Lane County Commissioner and a member of the Lane County Board of Health, I have long been concerned about the health impacts associated with tobacco use. I am not alone in this concern. Over the past two years, the Lane County Board of Health has consistently directed Lane County staff to bring forward evidence-based policy initiatives that encourage tobacco use prevention. One element of that work has been regular engagement with stakeholders throughout Lane County.

Thus I felt comfortable in late November, 2016 to make a motion asking staff to develop a Lane County-wide Tobacco 21 Ordinance. That motion was well supported, and as a result I expect the Lane County Board of Health to vote to adopt Oregon's first local law increasing the legal age required to purchase tobacco products from 18 to 21 as early as February 14, 2017. Ordinance 17-01 would become law 30 days after the vote.

I urge the Oregon Legislature to implement a similar law that would apply statewide. The evidence is clear that an effective way to decrease the potential for individuals to become addicted to nicotine is to delay the age at which people begin using nicotine products. I refer to a 2015 Institute of Medicine report which concluded that raising the minimum sales age to 21 would produce a 25% decrease in initiation rates among youth age 15-17.

I also want to note that the Lane County Board of Health is confident in our ability to pass a county-wide Ordinance as a result of the 2015 Legislature's passage of HB 3100, Public Health Modernization. This bill made it clear that the Local Public Health Authority has county-wide jurisdiction, and more so seeks to cement the partnership between local government and state government to carry out public health related activities that are now more important than ever.

I look forward to examining the proposals the Legislature may craft this session to provide a statewide overlay relating to the minimum age for tobacco product purchase.

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY