



CITY OF BEND

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710 NW WALL STREET

PO BOX 431

BEND, OR 97709

541-388-5505 TEL

Relay Users Dial 7-1-1

541-385-6676 fax

bendoregon.gov

MAYOR

Casey Roats

MAYOR PRO TEM

Sally Russell

CITY COUNCILORS

Justin Livingston

Bill Moseley

Bruce Abernethy

Nathan Boddie

Barb Campbell

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Eric King

Distinguished Members of the Senate Committee on Healthcare:

Thank you for considering my testimony on behalf of both myself and the City of Bend regarding the health and economic benefits our constituents would gain by raising the tobacco purchasing age to 21.

As a physician, I must share with you the tragic loss families feel when loved ones die of cancer and other tobacco related illness. Medical technology is no match for the insidious effects of smoking and tobacco use. Perhaps even more troubling is the long-term suffering of those who do not die from tobacco but suffer crippling, debilitating chronic disease. Personal suffering and costs to families in Bend and throughout Oregon are difficult to calculate in financial terms. However, consider the real economic costs of health care utilization, workforce productivity loss, and cost to local business related to tobacco costing Oregon more than \$3 billion annually. The impact is ongoing and corrosive to Bend's success as a community.

Ninety-five percent of smokers picked up the habit when they were teens, and with more than 1,800 Oregon teens becoming smokers each year, we can expect upwards of 68,000 of our children will die prematurely from tobacco use. Raising the age to purchase tobacco to 21 is the only responsible and ethical decision when we consider the alternatives. It tends to reduce teen smoking by 25 percent. Public health interventions rarely result in such a dramatic effect.

The City of Bend recognizes the potential to ease human suffering and realize economic benefit, which is why the City Council last year unanimously passed a recommendation that the State of Oregon raise the minimum legal sales age for tobacco to 21. I've included the proclamation here.

Please join the City of Bend, my colleagues on City Council, and your constituents and pass legislation to raise tobacco purchase age to 21 in Oregon. I appreciate your hard work in Salem on our behalf. Thank you for your service to our state. Please contact me with any questions or comments.

Respectfully,

Nathan K. Boddie, M.D., M.S.
Councilor, City of Bend

