



COALITION OF LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIALS

February 14, 2017

Senate Committee on Health Care
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 93701

Good afternoon Chair Monnes Anderson, Vice-Chair Kruse, and Members of the Senate Health Care Committee:

My name is Sara Hartstein and I am the Health Policy Specialist for Benton County Health Department. I am here today on behalf of the Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials to support raising the minimum legal sale age for tobacco products to 21 years of age statewide.

The Benton County Board of Commissioners considers the public's health and safety to be a top priority which is why they recently passed a resolution encouraging the Oregon Legislature to increase the sale age for tobacco and other nicotine products to 21. I have submitted the resolution for the record.

Increasing the sale age of tobacco and other nicotine products to 21 will have a positive impact on tobacco use prevalence as 95 percent of adults who currently use tobacco started smoking before they turned 21. Postponing the age when young people first begin using nicotine products can reduce the risk that they will become addicted and prevent unnecessary deaths, disease and health care costs caused by tobacco use.

In addition to Benton County's Tobacco 21 resolution, the Board of Commissioners have taken steps to protect the community's health by reducing exposure and access to tobacco and nicotine products by:

- Strengthening our local smokefree workplace law beyond Oregon law to prohibit smoking in vape shops, smoke shops, and hookah lounges; and
- Expanding our local tobacco retail license requirements to prohibit issuance of a license to a tobacco retailer at a location within a distance of 1,000 feet of a school or within 1,000 feet of another tobacco retailer.

On behalf of the Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials, I urge you to support this important bill.



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