

From: [Marguerite Cohen](#)
To: [LRO](#)
Cc: [Marguerite Cohen](#); [Courtnei Dresser](#)
Subject: Testimony in favor of HB 2270
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Testimony in favor of HB2270

To the members of the Revenue Committee

I write to you today in support of HB 2270 which would raise the tax on tobacco and tobacco products. I have practiced Obstetrics and Gynecology in Portland since 1985, and have seen the devastating medical effects of tobacco products on children, youth and adults.

It is time for the Oregon Legislature to stand up to the tobacco industry, and take these necessary steps to lower healthcare costs in our state. Approximately 9% of all spending on the Oregon Health Plan is directly related to illness caused by smoking. The estimated cost to the Oregon Health Plan of smoking related illnesses is about \$374 million dollars each year.

This legislation will provide \$173 million dollars each year to the Oregon Health Plan, which covers nearly one million Oregonians. It also provides meaningful investments in programs that promote both prevention of initiation and help with cessation of nicotine use. The tobacco tax will provide funds for the Oregon Health Plan and will help stabilize long term health insurance costs; these funds from will provide healthcare access to over 400,000 children in our state. It will do this through a \$2 per pack increase in tax on cigarettes and a first ever tax on e-cigarettes in the state.

Tobacco companies have targeted communities of color, Native American tribes, people with low income, and the LGBTQ community with advertising campaigns. It is important to ensure that all communities have the resources needed to support quitting all nicotine products when they are ready. We know that raising the price of tobacco and nicotine products is the single most effective tool decrease use. It is estimated that a 10% increase in price will lead to a 4% decrease in adult consumption and a 7% decrease in youth consumption.

Today e-cigarette companies are targeting children and youth with high potency, highly addictive, nicotine containing products. Since 2017, the number of middle school children who have tried an e-cigarette has increased by 48%, E-cigarettes will lead to more young people who are addicted to nicotine.

Smoking is the number one cause of preventable death in Oregon. We know it causes cancer and birth defects. This proposal will prevent over 19,000 youth from starting smoking, and will help 31,00 Oregonians to quit.

The time is right for this legislation. The medical community offers strong support for this important bill, which will improve public health.

Please support HB 2270.

Yours truly

Marguerite P. Cohen, MD
Legislative Chair, District VIII
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

620 SE 55th Ave.
Portland, OR 97215

mpcohen@teleport.com
cell: 503-804-5464