



To: House Committee of Revenue

Date: April 11th, 2019

Re: House Bill 2270

Good morning chair Nathanson and members of the committee. My name is Marley VonWerssowetz and I am a Senior at Portland State University majoring in public health interning this term with the American Heart Association, here today in support of HB 2270.

Tobacco remains the number one cause of preventable death and disease in Oregon, causing nearly 8,000 deaths per year.

In public health, something we all understand is the power of prevention. One of the best ways to reduce the number of tobacco-related deaths and disease is to deter people from using these products, especially youth. Raising this tobacco tax helps price youth out of the market, preventing 19,000 kids from smoking and the potential health outcomes we know to be associated with tobacco use. HB 2270 would raise the tobacco tax not only on cigarettes but also on e-cigarettes, the fastest growing tobacco product among youth and is currently untaxed in Oregon. Data from the CDC and FDA state that in 2018, nationally one in five high school kids used e-cigarettes, a 78% increase from 2017.

According to the Tobacco Centers of Regulatory Science, cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in smokers. Direct medical costs related to cardiovascular disease are larger than medical costs related to any other disease, including Alzheimer's and diabetes. Additionally, indirect costs of cardiovascular disease related to lost productivity in the workplace and home can have lasting influence through morbidity and premature mortality.

While rates of tobacco use have lowered since the 1970s, new forms of tobacco such as e-cigarettes and vape have replaced some of the traditional tobacco types, increasing popularity and ultimately risk posed to users, new and old. Cigarette smoking is well established to cause acute cardiovascular events like heart attack, stroke, and sudden death. Smoking cigarettes can cause an array of body disruptions that can lead to cardiovascular disease and lifelong health



issues. This critical tax not only supports clinical services to vulnerable populations covered by the Oregon Health Plan, it will provide vital support for community-driven tobacco prevention, education, and cessation programs throughout the state.

Members of the committee, I urge you to support HB 2270 outlining the \$2 tobacco tax increase and taxation on e-cigarette products. There are many benefits from this tax, from reducing financial burdens to establishing a healthier population. That being said, the greatest benefit of HB 2270 is preventing people from ever developing lifelong addiction to tobacco products and the negative health outcomes we see associated with their use.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.