

OREGON PROGRESSIVE PARTY



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**Oregon Progressive Party
Position on Bills at 2019
Session of Oregon Legislature:**

HB 2158, HB 2159, HB 2169, HB 2270: Support

Dear Committee:

The Oregon Progressive Party supports these bills, which would increase taxes on tobacco and impose taxes on vaping equipment and liquids.

Use of tobacco is a huge public health disaster. Vaping of nicotine-infused chemical steams of unknown composition, known as vaping "liquids," is a growing threat to public health, both for those who vape and those around them, including children and infants.

Oregon has no taxes on vaping equipment or liquids, unlike California, Minnesota, Kansas, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, North Carolina, Delaware, the District of Columbia, and some cities in Illinois and Alaska. HB 2159 would impose a tax equal to 95% of the wholesale price of the vaping equipment or inhalant product (liquid). This is the same level already in place in Minnesota. The Washington Legislature is considering a tax equal to 60% of the retail price. The existing California tax is 65.08% of the wholesale price. We recommend a tax equal to not less than 300% of the wholesale price or 200% of the retail price. Higher taxes will discourage the purchase of these toxic concoctions laced with the highly addictive nicotine.

HB 2123 proposes somewhat lower taxes on vaping systems and liquids and should be rejected.

HB 2270 raises the taxes on cigarettes from 3 cents/cigarette to 13 cents/cigarette (or from about 60 cents per pack to \$2.60 per pack). This would leave Oregon still with lower taxes on cigarettes than Washington or California. Oregon should immediately adopt the Washington tax of \$3.025 per pack. Oregon should then enter into an interstate compact with Washington and California to raise the tax to \$6.00 per pack (or higher) in all 3 states.

The states should set aside considerable funds for anti-tobacco education and treatment for nicotine addiction.

HB 2158 removes the 50 cent limit on taxes on cigars. We support.

Oregon Progressive Party

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