



June 17, 2019

**Clackamas County Board of Commissioners
Policy Position
HB 2270: Related to Tobacco Tax Measure**

Clackamas County supports HB 2270: The Board of County Commissioners supports sending to the voters a request to increase taxes on tobacco and nicotine products.

Clackamas County supports the proposed tax increases because of the potential impact they have on decreasing tobacco consumption. Clackamas County also supports HB 2270 because a proportion of the tax revenue would support tobacco cessation services and tobacco-related chronic disease prevention programs.

Tobacco remains the number one cause of preventable death for Oregonians; greater than obesity, alcohol, motor, and firearms. In Clackamas County, there were 679 tobacco-related deaths in 2017 and over \$150 million spent on tobacco-related medical care. The infusion of new tobacco delivery through vaping has proliferated a culture targeting youth and young adults. As evidenced by the Oregon Healthy Teens Survey in 2017, 20% of 11th graders in Clackamas County answered “yes” when asked if they used e-cigarettes in the last 30 days. Tobacco delivery products such as e-cigarettes and Juuls are not taxed and have the capacity to deliver nicotine at greater rates than traditional cigarettes and cigars.

Raising the price of tobacco is part of a comprehensive strategy to decrease tobacco use and prevent youth from starting. Studies clearly show that the majority of adults who smoke began before the age of 21, and that more expensive tobacco products reduce use for both adults and youth, with youth seeing greater reductions in use. The status quo perpetuates youth access and leaves Public Health authorities and the health care industry with greater work than their funding can bear.

Clackamas County supports the state legislature’s intent to advance this question to the voters, and it is our hope that the public agrees on the need to take this action to help curb the use of tobacco products in Oregon. Prevention will always cost Oregonians less money than treating tobacco-related chronic disease.

We urge a “YES” vote on HB 2270.

Please contact Chris Lyons at clyons@clackamas.us for more information.