



245 SW BANCROFT STREET, SUITE E, PORTLAND, OR 97239

June 17, 2019

Dear Co-Chair Hass and Co-Chair Nathanson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 2270. The Oregon Latino Health Coalition (OLHC) is proud to support the \$2 increase in Oregon cigarette tax. As shown in several studies (see references listed), raising tobacco taxes is an effective measure to reduce smoking and provide sustainable funding to the Oregon Health Plan.

OLHC is a statewide health advocacy organization working to eliminate health disparities in the Latino community. We have been a major voice for initiating and advancing policies and programs to build healthy communities. Through community engagement, policy advocacy, and leadership development, OLHC is instrumental in promoting the health and well-being of all Oregonians.

Tobacco is the single most preventable cause of death and disease in our society and a major contributor to health care costs. Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body, and according to the Surgeon General's Report, smoking and other tobacco use, takes a toll on the health of Latinos. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death among Latino men and the second leading among Latina women. Tobacco use is a crucial risk factor. National research indicates that e-cigarettes are the most commonly used tobacco product among Latino high school students (see references listed).

Oregon's Latino population is growing faster than the nationwide average and significantly younger than white Oregonians. The youth are particularly price-sensitive, and a tobacco tax increase on all tobacco and vaping products, including e-cigarettes will help to prevent Latinos from becoming the next big wave of tobacco consumers. Latinos, are also the least likely of any racial or ethnic group to have health insurance. With limited access to health care, it is less likely that Latino smokers will be advised by a health care provider to quit smoking or have access to cessation treatments. Raising the tobacco tax by \$2 will help fund health care for low-income Oregonians and support people that want to quit smoking.

At OLHC we serve as a trusted organization and apply community based interventions that are culturally and linguistically responsive. HB 2270 supports an investment in culturally responsive cessation and prevention programs. As the Latino population continues to grow, it is increasingly important to ensure that they have access to health care opportunities they need to thrive. Therefore, we respectfully request your support of HB 2270 for the well-being of all our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Olivia Quiroz".

Olivia Quiroz, Executive Director



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Footnote

1. Multnomah County Health Department, The Selling of Tobacco in Multnomah County--June 2015. <https://multco.us/file/42999/download>
2. Oregon Health Authority, Current tobacco use and related topics among 8th and 11th graders by race and ethnicity, Oregon 2017--November 2017, https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/BIRTHDEATHCERTIFICATES/SURVEYS/OREGONHEALTHYTEENS/Documents/2017/RaceEthnicityOHT_Tobacco.pdf
3. The Oregon Community Foundation (OCF), Latinos in Oregon: Trends and Opportunities in a Changing State--August 2016.
4. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs—2014, http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/best_practices/.
5. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Smoking & Tobacco Use: Hispanics/Latinos and Tobacco Use--March 2018, <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/disparities/hispanics-latinos/index.htm>
6. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Vital Signs: Tobacco Product Use Among Middle and High School Students--United States, 2011-2018, https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6806e1.htm?s_cid=mm6806e1_w