



Clatsop County

Department of Public Health

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February 26, 2021

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Knopp and Members of the Committee,

Tobacco use remains the number one cause of preventable death and disease in Oregon, costing Oregonians an estimated \$2.9 billion every year in lost productivity and medical costs. 90% of tobacco users become addicted while teenagers; 21.4% of Oregon high school students use e-cigarettes; 1,000 kids under age 18 become new daily smokers each year; and 5,500 Oregon adults die each year from their tobacco addiction.¹ Clearly, if we can prevent youth from becoming addicted to nicotine, we can greatly reduce the terrible toll tobacco addiction takes on Oregonians' health, quality of life, and finances.

Right now, tobacco is the only age-restricted product that is not subject to licensing as alcohol and guns are. A strong Tobacco Retail License (TRL) law provides for effective retailer education and enforcement to cover every tobacco retailer in the state. SB 587 is self-funded by license fees and penalties paid by tobacco retailers. SB 587 will ensure that all retailers are educated about the law, inspected annually, and a mechanism is in place to discontinue a license from a tobacco retailer that repeatedly breaks the law by selling to minors. It provides strong back-up enforcement for Oregon's T21 law which restricts sales of tobacco products to age 21 and over.

In addition, a state TRL will include retailers who sell nicotine-containing vape and e-cigarette products. Had a TRL been in place when the youth vaping epidemic took off in 2019, Oregon would have been in a much better place to regulate and control the alarming rise of vaping among our youth.

Clatsop County adopted a strong TRL in January, 2020 that covers every tobacco retailer in each city and unincorporated areas of the county.² Our TRL is self-sustaining and includes provisions that prohibit price-lowering strategies, another effective tool in reducing youth tobacco use rates. The proposed SB 587 will allow Clatsop County to continue to regulate its retailers, collect the fees, and provide for local enforcement. As written this bill will not preempt existing or future local TRL ordinances, such as CC, that may contain stronger provisions than SB587.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit this testimony.

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¹ <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/oregon>

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