



04/19/2023

Chair Fahey and Members of the House Rules Committee,

The Oregon Alcohol Policy Alliance writes in emphatic support of HB 3610. We are grateful to Representatives Sanchez and Nosse for taking the bold step forward towards assessing the impacts of alcohol and addiction services in Oregon, and we thank all of the legislators who've signed onto the bill.

12.34% of Oregonians over the age of 12 are addicted to alcohol – the 5th worst in the country. While recognizing that the local industry may bring economic benefit to the state, we must also acknowledge the societal, health, and economic costs of alcohol on our communities. The State of Oregon has dedicated hundreds of millions of dollars to Oregon's soaring substance use rates, of which alcohol is the largest single contributor. A study commissioned by OHA shows that excessive alcohol use (known as binge drinking) cost the state \$4.8 billion in lost worker productivity, health care, social welfare and education programs, and criminal justice and motor vehicle accidents in 2019 alone. To put these costs into context, the \$4.8 billion in economic losses stemming from excessive drinking represented roughly two percent of the 2019 gross state domestic product. Averaged across the population, excessive alcohol use cost Oregon \$1,100 per person.

Alcohol takes the lives of **six** Oregonians every day, and it is the **third leading preventable cause of death** in our state. It's time to change our relationship with alcohol. We support HB 3610 because it is the first step in making meaningful, evidence-based change to address the alcohol crisis in Oregon.

The task force established in HB 3610 will help us better understand the full nature, scope, and extent of the alcohol crisis in Oregon. Moreover, it will equip us with the information we need to most effectively and efficiently deliver alcohol addiction services where they are needed most. This bill is protective of our public health and our economy: we will learn how to better prevent alcohol related harms from happening, and to mitigate the harms already underway.

Respectfully, we would also ask the committee to consider two minor changes to the bill, including adding:

**1) Specific seats for members of the task force as follows:**

- Black, Indigenous, and people of color, especially those with lived experience relating to alcohol addiction
- Tribal Communities, especially those with lived experience relating to alcohol addiction
- Public health experts
- Addiction medicine physicians
- Representatives of the distilled spirits industry.

**2) The following subjects for study:**

- The disproportionate level of harm that alcohol imposes on BIPOC and Tribal Communities
- Predatory alcohol product marketing, especially with regard to minors, women, and BIPOC populations
- The extent to which alcohol is involved in opioid and methamphetamine overdoses
- The relationship between alcohol use and cancer rates, gun violence, suicide, crime and domestic violence
- The role alcohol is playing in the state's homelessness crisis.
- The disproportionate harm created by distilled spirits compared to beer, cider and wine.

We thank you for your consideration of HB 3610, and urge your support.

Sincerely,

Lizzy Atwood Wills, Coordinator  
Oregon Alcohol Policy Alliance

The Oregon Alcohol Policy Alliance is a coalition made up of treatment providers, program administrators, behavioral health leaders, public agencies, preventionists, public health advocates, community organizations, and individuals in recovery or family members impacted by alcohol use, and together, we advocate for evidence-based policy to prevent alcohol-related harms and improve equitable community health outcomes in Oregon.