

Submitter: John A Dougherty PhD

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4002

My name is John Dougherty and I for the past 50 years have been conducting substance use research and developing treatment programs in hospital and public health venues.

Criminalization of substance use and sanctioning/incarcerating users has a long and sad history of failure to reduce the harm of substance use to users and to the larger community. Re-criminalization of public use can only be expected to cover up the problem from the eyes of the community rather than address the problems that have lead to public use, is likely to increase the burden on the police and on the jails and prisons - leading to inadequate detox and acute health care, and will make treatment and reentry into society much more difficult.

I do believe that Measure 110 has resulted in unforeseen and negative economic and aesthetic conditions in parts of Portland and related areas because of public drug use and the resulting intoxication. The remedy is not to abandon Measure 110, but to further adapt it to achieve a better mix of effects. An adaptation by re-criminalization of illicit drug use will not be effective in making a healthier population, but only will serve to hide the problems while facilitating economic interests. The experiences of other countries with managing substance using citizen's behavior is to reduce harm by providing readily available treatment - which may involve harm reduction activities while enhancing readiness for treatment. Providing designated, safe, and medically supervised places for using substances has been an effective first step in reducing the burden on society while providing a place for a progression of assessment, detox, and treatment to begin.

Limiting the ability of substance users to re-integrate into society by charging them with criminal offenses only works against the overall health and success of society. Thank you for your consideration. John A Dougherty, PhD