

Submitter: Stephen Such

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3940

Proposal to place a surcharge of 5 cents on sales of beverage containers for purposes of wildfire prevention and response

It's a Hidden Sales Tax on Consumers – Oregonians already pay a 10-cent deposit per bottle under our successful, privately run Bottle Bill. Adding another 5 cents is nothing more than a retail sales tax on everyday beverages, which disproportionately harms working families and Oregon breweries like ours.

Threatens a Proven, Private Recycling System – The Bottle Bill has been a national success precisely because it operates without government interference. Taxing the system will burden local brewers, distributors, retailers, and consumers, undermining a program that has worked for decades.

There Is No Correlation Between Recycling and Wildfire Funding– A waste-free, clean environment through a viable and gold-standard bottle return system has zero connection to statewide wildfire funding needs. The proposed tax feels misplaced and incongruent when compared to existing funding sources.

Better Funding Alternatives Exist – Instead of imposing new taxes, Oregon should look at existing revenues such as:

Redirecting the insurance tax (which is already collected).

Using lottery funds, as proposed by Sen. Fred Girod.

Prioritizing better forest management rather than simply throwing more taxpayer dollars at the problem.

A Misaligned Funding Mechanism – Property tax, income tax, the kicker, ending fund balance, and retaliatory tax can all be justified as mechanisms for funding wildfire prevention. But this Bottle Bill tax sticks out like a sore thumb, lacking any logical connection to the issue at hand.

This bill is government overreach at its worst—it expands taxation on everyday products while failing to address the root causes of wildfires. I urge you to drop the bottle and can tax components and stand up for Oregon families and businesses by demanding a fiscally responsible solution to wildfire prevention.