

Submitter: Allison Bruner
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3940

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB3940, which proposes a 5-cent surcharge on beverage containers for wildfire prevention and response. As an owner/operator in Oregon's vibrant craft beverage industry, I believe this bill would have devastating consequences on our small businesses, consumers, and the environment.

A Hidden Sales Tax on Consumers: Oregonians already pay a 10-cent deposit under the Bottle Bill. Adding an additional surcharge would essentially turn this program into a regressive sales tax on consumers, particularly harming working families and local businesses. Small breweries like mine, already struggling under the weight of inflation, supply chain disruptions, and labor shortages, simply cannot afford another tax burden.

Undermining a Successful, Private Recycling System: Oregon's Bottle Bill is a well-established, successful, privately-run system that has worked for decades without government interference. This proposal would disrupt that system, imposing unnecessary costs on breweries, distributors, and retailers. Our state's waste management system already has the necessary mechanisms in place to support effective recycling—this bill undermines that progress.

No Connection Between Recycling and Wildfire Funding: The core issue with this bill is the illogical and misplaced connection between beverage container recycling and wildfire prevention funding. There is no direct correlation between the success of the Bottle Bill and the need for additional funding for wildfire response. It feels like a money grab with little regard for the actual causes of wildfires or effective funding solutions.

Existing Funding Mechanisms are More Appropriate: Rather than imposing a new tax on consumers and businesses, Oregon should explore existing funding sources like the insurance tax or the lottery fund, as proposed by Senator Fred Girod. These options would provide a more sustainable and equitable solution without burdening local businesses and residents.

Government Overreach and Burden on Small Businesses: The expansion of taxation on everyday products is an overreach that places undue strain on small businesses and families. We must focus on more targeted, fiscally responsible solutions for wildfire prevention, not a generalized tax that impacts a broad range of local businesses.

I urge you to reject HB3940 and explore more thoughtful and effective approaches to funding wildfire prevention efforts.

Sincerely,
Allison Bruner