OREGON COALITION OF LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIALS

Representing the collective interests of Oregon's 33 local public health authorities to improve the health of all Oregonians.

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Re: Support SB 1571A

Public Health has been fighting the fight against tobacco and nicotine products for decades. Many of Oregon's public health leaders started their careers as tobacco prevention specialists and the issues they were dealing with 10 and 20 years ago are still the same issues they are fighting today. The tobacco industry is crafty and innovative. They hire the best lawyers to find the loopholes in the laws and then create new products that exploit those loopholes. And they continue to hook our kids with these new products and sweet, tasty flavors.

Products made with synthetic nicotine circumvent our current legal definition of tobacco, so this substance is used in lieu of natural nicotine derived from tobacco plants in mouth pouches, gums, tablets, and gummies – with tasty flavors like mint, cinnamon, and various fruit flavors - raspberry lemonade, for example.

These are products that youth can use without teachers knowing, and without parents knowing. "It's just gum, mom." When was the last time you inspected your kids' gum package? That's why it's so incredibly important to make sure these products are under the same regulations as cigarettes and vaping devices. SB 1571A will ensure these products are not legally sellable to kids.

Tobacco/nicotine continues to be the number one cause of preventable disease and death in this country. Billions of dollars are spent on tobacco-related healthcare costs. Youth who initiate nicotine use are likely to become addicted, long-term users. In fact, 90% of adult smokers report they started as teens.

By closing these loopholes per SB 1571A, you will make it harder for kids to get their hands on these highly addictive products. You will improve their health and the health of our state. You will eventually decrease the cost of nicotine related healthcare. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Local public health urges you to support SB 1571A for the health of our state. Thank you–

Sincerely,
Sarah J Lochner
Executive Director