



House Committee on Revenue Committee  
Testimony of CTUIR Chairman Gary Burke  
April 11, 2019

Chair Nathanson and members of the committee,

My name is Gary Burke. I am the Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and I am here to support House Bill 2270.

We applaud the State's work with our tribal government, including our Health Commission and Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center, on this matter.

Tobacco use and vaping products are an unfortunate reality in our tribal community. The 2015 Umatilla-Morrow County Community Health Assessment indicated that 23% of American Indians/Alaska Natives reported using tobacco products versus 15% of Umatilla County respondents and 17% in the State of Oregon. But we are making progress.

Many know of our tribal government's commitment to community health with the opening of our Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center. We have established tobacco prevention policy goals. We want to restart conversations across the tribal community about how devastating tobacco use can be to long-term health. And we must get through to young people about the dangers of vaping.

Right now, Yellowhawk is focusing energy on three areas:

- We manage a tobacco quit line.
- We operate a cessation program.
- We provide referrals to Behavior Health for counseling.

The support we offer has been important to tribal members who want to stop using tobacco. But there is so much more we could do.

If Yellowhawk had additional funding, we would hire a Tobacco Prevention Coordinator to provide case management in the tobacco cessation clinic to help people to be successful. They could also play a liaison role with other Tribes to share information about what is working and that could boost our success statewide. And, when it comes to the kids, we know the tobacco industry targets native youth, so we would do more tobacco education and outreach with them.

And finally, I want to clarify for the record that reservations do not create a black market for tobacco sales. On the Umatilla Reservation, sales of all tobacco products include any and all applicable state tobacco taxes.