



June 19, 2019

TO: The Honorable Nancy Nathanson, Co-Chair
The Honorable Mark Hass, Co-Chair
Members of the Joint Committee on Tax Expenditures

FROM: Peter Reed, MD, MPH FAAP
Oregon Pediatric Society

SUBJECT: HB 2270, Raising Tobacco & Vaping Taxes

I am Dr. Peter Reed, a pediatrician practicing in Tigard, Oregon and representing the Oregon Pediatric Society (OPS). OPS is the state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Our members are committed to improving the health and well-being of all Oregon children. We carry out our health equity mission through policy advocacy; quality improvement programs that support practice change; and the ongoing education of providers who serve children. We support HB 2270, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) bill to raise tobacco taxes, including on vaping devices and products.

Oregon has seen a dramatic rise in vaping among teens, which pediatricians see daily in our patients. The Oregon Healthy Teens survey says that e-cigarette use among 11th graders nearly tripled from 5% in 2013 to 13% in 2017. Based on national data showing high school e-cigarette use increasing, we would expect to see the Oregon rate of teen vaping to be north of 21% in 2018. Furthermore, of the teens who currently use tobacco, half started by vaping. Contrary to industry suggestions that vaping can be a tool to quit cigarettes, vaping is for teens the golden ticket to a lifetime of nicotine dependence. Vaping products and devices should not remain tax-free and, therefore, less expensive and more appealing to youth. HB 2270 taxes vaping products and devices on a par with other deadly tobacco products.

HB 2270 will also cut teen tobacco use by raising cigarette prices. The \$2 per pack price increase on cigarettes, the OHA estimates, will lead to a 24% reduction in teen cigarette smoking. By requiring that cigarettes, 'little' cigars, most cigarillos, and any flavored versions of these products be packaged 20 to a pack,



HB 2270 will effectively raise the sticker price of these products and discourage their use among teens, who are particularly drawn to flavored and cheap tobacco products.

OPS also endorses the use of funds raised by these taxes to support tobacco prevention programs and health programs through the OHA.

OPS strongly supports HB 2270. By raising the cost to purchase deadly tobacco, including vaping devices and products, HB 2270 will dramatically decrease youth tobacco use in Oregon. This will allow more teens to live tobacco-free, healthy, productive lives.

If the committee would like more information from the Oregon Pediatric Society or myself, please do not hesitate to contact us.