

## Testimony

I have been a citizen of Ontario for almost 6 years. I have supported the passing of the marijuana bill to allow the recreational sale of marijuana in the town. The point of the sales was to get a tax for the City to improve the town. So far, the City of Ontario's Council and City Manager has not used the tax money to make any improvements to the lives of the citizens. They have rejected opportunities to help the homeless, fix the community pool, update park equipment and so forth. We have no current plans for a medical facility for drug abusers, no school improvements or updates, everyone is suffering.

Our own Mayor who suggested the lobbying for the passage of this bill is currently suing the City, with his business, over \$500 when he rightfully owes more for his failure to maintain his property! This is ridiculous and a misuse of his power. Not to mention the current council wants to put \$3 million of the marijuana tax towards employees, their retirement and raises and leave the citizens with absolutely nothing. We have gained nothing from the marijuana dispensaries being in our town.

I oppose HB 2015, because the City who is lobbying for it cannot budget effectively, nor does it deserve any more money from marijuana taxes. This City is full of selfish people, not realizing that the only cities who could possibly benefit from this increase is Ontario, OR and Portland, OR due to the influx of out of towners who may frequent to purchase cannabis in Oregon. Unfortunately, what happens to the majority of the citizens living in Bend, Medford, Salem, Eugene and so forth? How will they survive off an increase if their cities decide to impose it to follow suit if this is passed? We are still in a pandemic and Oregon citizens are still suffering. The Mayor and City Council of Ontario do not care about their own citizens, so of course they would not think about their fellow families on the Western side of the state who depend on this form of medicine as much as the next person.

To add 90% of Councilors in office in Ontario were against the petition to allow marijuana sales. They played racially motivated movies at the Four Rivers Cultural Center, bought billboards, signs and named their campaign "The Conservative's Choice", but now seeing that they were all wrong, they are money hungry for the marijuana tax. Not to forget all their bright ideas of increasing revenue for the City have miserably failed and the citizens are looking at them as jokes of the town. The Councilors of Ontario are now unleashing their own attack on the democratic, leftist, side of the State as a punishment to the people for feeling left out of major issues involving the Governor, but what are they actively doing to help their own community? Nothing, they are suing their community for \$500. They are denying their citizens a pool, park equipment, adequate housing and toilets for the homeless, improved educational resources and so forth.

To conclude, the House should deny HB 2015 due to the facts. The facts are plain and simple. It took the City of Ontario 3 years to allow the sale of recreational marijuana. In the time that the city has received marijuana taxes they have used it to increase their PERS by giving raises to their employees, paid on PERS and hired more employees, thus increasing PERS still. They do not care what the citizens want or would like. The City Council needs a wakeup call on how to properly budget and allocate resources for the betterment of all 13,000 citizens and not just the few hundred employees. Our firefighters could use better vehicles and are fixing their own trucks on company time, because the City cannot afford a decent mechanic for them. We have sidewalks that are halfway complete or in shambles. The roads are full of potholes that the City is currently charging its citizens an extra fee on our utility bills for, that the Mayor has promised for 3 years to remove. For this the citizens are due a refund from the City. Our roads need to be paved with concrete instead of rocks and oil. We have parks that

still have metal slides that burn in the summers when children slide down them. Most of the parks have dangerous and outdated equipment. Ontario has an increasing homeless population that are suffering and terrorizing businesses, because they have nowhere to go. We have no shelters for them, no toilets available to them. We have drug addicts that have no rehab facilities to go to. The Mayor stated during his campaign he found used needles in his park, Moore Park, that he rents to the City for \$1 a year. Citizens are putting together cleanup crews to clean the town without any financial or physical help from the City Council. The last thing the City of Ontario needs is more money to misdirect and misuse. I believe after this bill fails, the City Manager and Council should go back to the drawing board, work on helping the betterment of its citizens, by budgeting and planning with the major increase of financial resources available to them. We have a phenomenal Community Development Coordinator/ Planner who knows what needs to be done and created a plan that needs to be finished for the beautification of Ontario. Once results are shown not only to the citizens, but the State than a more reasonable bill that would benefit all of the cities in the State should be proposed and lobbied to the House. Right this moment, the City of Ontario is not ready, willing or deserving.

Signed,

Cydney Cooke