

Oregon Recovers asks the Committee to oppose HB 2742. Oregon is in the midst of a global pandemic, coupled with an unprecedented addiction crisis that is being fueled by alcohol. This is not the time to be increasing access or sales of alcohol, particularly for a part of the industry that is enjoying record sales.

Alcohol related deaths have risen 34 percent in the last 21 years in Oregon and are the third leading cause of preventable death in Oregon. Alcohol is responsible for the deaths of five per day, or five times as many people as all drug overdoses combined. The CDC and WHO both issued recommendations that governments restrict access to alcohol during the pandemic to mitigate longterm addiction risks, as well as increased risk for COVID transmission. Despite these recommendations, OLCC and the alcohol industry have continually pursued efforts to increase and streamline access to these products.

OHA estimates that binge drinking alone costs Oregon state and local governments 3.5 billion dollars per year which is 1.5 billion dollars more than the entire economic contribution of the alcohol industry, according to their own lobbyists.

Oregon Recovers is fully aware that on-premise establishments have been hit particularly hard by the pandemic and fully support efforts to sustain those businesses when those efforts do not go against public health best practices. However, this bill is not designed to help bars and restaurants, but instead help off-premise license holders. Off-premise alcohol sales have soared during the pandemic, accounting for a much higher rate of sales than the drop in bar and restaurant sales. This bill is bad public policy and clearly contradicts all public health recommendations relative to alcohol sales and the pandemic.

Please vote no on HB 2742