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March 1, 2020
Statement in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 587
Tobacco Retail Licensure
Shawn Miller, Northwest Grocery Association

The Northwest Grocery Association supports SB 587, which creates a statewide tobacco licensing program which would coordinate with the existing five County licensing programs. NWGA has always been concerned with a patchwork approach of local licensing programs and would rather have a coordinated state-wide approach versus additional Counties adopting their own programs. Currently Washington and Clackamas Counties are considering programs with more to likely follow in the next few years.

NWGA participated in the Multnomah County tobacco license rule advisory committee and envisions a consistent approach to enforcement and outreach from a state-wide program with the passage of Senate Bill 587. The bill allows Counties to continue their programs but would not layer the statewide license on top of the local license. Therefore, businesses would not be regulated by both State and local entities under the passage of SB 587.

NWGA supports licensing as a way to prevent underage access to tobacco. Although, the policy is designed to penalize those businesses who sell to minors, advocates at the County level have pushed extreme license restrictions such as banning tobacco sales of locations that have a pharmacy. These policies are punitive and presumes guilt before the business is able to sell responsibly. Senate Bill 587 preempts these local pharmacy restrictions.

NWGA respectfully asks for your support of Senate Bill 587.

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