

Testimony OPPOSING HB 2089
Submitted by Oregon Recovers
February 8, 2023
House Committee on Revenue

Chair Nathanson and Members of the House Committee on Revenue:

My name is Mike Marshall and I have the honor and privilege to serve as the Executive Director of Oregon Recovers. We are a movement of people in recovery from addiction with the mission to transform Oregon's fractured and incomplete addiction recovery system into a recovery-based, continuum of care which recognizes addiction as a chronic disease. I'm also a person in long-term recovery which, for me, means I've not used drugs or alcohol in 15 years.

I'm here today to urge you to vote against HB 2089.

As some of you may know, Oregon Recovers was a leading voice against Measure 110 prior to its passage in 2020. **One of our primary concerns was that it “stole from Peter to pay Paul.”** In other words, it looked to solve Oregon's addiction crisis by transferring funding from important public education and county mental health programs to critically important recovery support programs. Sadly, what it did not do, was generate new revenue to meet the needs of the rapidly unfolding behavioral health crisis. Transferring funds from needed programs to other needed programs simply does not solve the problem.

Unfortunately, as crafted, HB 2089 is Measure 110 in reverse. It's Peter clawing back the money that Paul received. The distinction here is that voters passed Measure 110 with the goal of increasing access to treatment for Oregonians suffering from addiction.

Seemingly, one of the primary purposes of HB 2089 is to protect Oregon's emerging cannabis industry. Hence, I'll not make the case today for the importance of the 400 organizations that will be negatively if HB 2089 is passed-- others have already made that case more eloquently than I ever could. Instead, I'd like to provide you with a broader context to help you—as you consider concerns about the health of the cannabis industry-- to determine what is in the best interest to your constituents. And, more importantly, offer a “third way” that will meet the needs of both HB 2089 advocates and opponents.

- According to the federal government (NSDUH), **18.2 % of your constituents—about 12,740 people in each House District—suffer from addiction.** Comparatively, the cannabis industry only employs 9175 individuals across the state—or about 152 people per district.
- According to the state Alcohol & Drug Policy Commission, **untreated addiction costs the Oregon economy \$6.9 Billion annually.** Comparatively, the Cannabis industry only contributes \$1.2 billion to the Oregon economy annually. That's a net negative for the Oregon economy of \$5.7 BILLION.
- **The 400 organizations funded with Measure 110 money cannot provide the services they provide using federal (Medicaid) money.** Comparatively, the State Police can—and should--use federal funds to combat the international drug cartels that are harming Oregon's cannabis market.

I'm not suggesting that proponents don't have legitimate concerns—I'm simply saying that, in balance, they pale in comparison to the need to address Oregon's addiction crisis.

BUT BOTH SIDES NEED NOT COMPETE FOR THE SAME MONEY. I urge you to look to your colleague, Rep. Tawna Sanchez, for a solution to this problem. She is proposing legislation (LC 1869) that would more than adequately meet the needs of advocates and opponents of HB 2089 alike.

Rep. Sanchez will be introducing the Alcohol Harm Reduction and Cost Savings Act. LC 1869 will, for the first time since 1983, raise Oregon's miniscule beer and wine taxes, with the goal of reducing underage and binge drinking. Doing so incrementally over 5 years **will ultimately generate an ADDITIONAL \$250 million annually** and will begin to reduce Oregon's sky-high untreated addiction rate.

Its time to stop stealing from Peter to pay Paul. HB 2089 will cause more economic harm than good. And it is unnecessary. I urge you to vote against 2089 and instead work with Rep. Sanchez to secure passage of her long-overdue legislation to make the alcohol industry pay their fair share to end Oregon's addiction crisis.