



March 2, 2023

Chair Bynum and Members of the House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business,

On behalf of the Oregon Alcohol Policy Alliance, which advocates for evidence-based policy to prevent alcohol related harms and improve equitable community health outcomes in Oregon, we are writing to bring your attention to Oregon's alcohol crisis, in which Oregon ranks 5th in the nation for alcohol addiction, and where 12% of Oregonians over the age of 12 are struggling with alcohol use disorder.

The Oregon Alcohol Policy Alliance opposes HB 2976, and other efforts by the state to further promote the consumption of alcohol, as these efforts directly contradict countless studies and research which claim that *there is no safe amount of alcohol consumption*. By passing a law to allow even a semi-independent state board for distilled spirits, the State would be endorsing the consumption of a toxic, carcinogenic, and addictive substance.

Six Oregonians die each day due to alcohol. In Oregon, alcohol is the 3rd leading *preventable* cause of death, and Oregon ranks 50th in the nation in access to treatment. This crisis is far-reaching and is not just about individual health or choices – binge drinking, in fact, costs the Oregon economy \$4.8 billion annually.

And while the industry claims economic hardship and a need to further promote distilled spirits as is proposed in HB 2976, the state actually spends \$2.08 per alcoholic drink to mitigate the impacts of the alcohol crisis.

Decreasing excessive alcohol use through upstream prevention and education for youth, increasing the price of alcohol, improving the public health and accountability structure at the OLCC, and informing consumers of the risks associated with alcohol through labeling and signage would decrease alcohol-related mortalities, alcohol-impaired driving and motor vehicle crashes, crime and domestic violence, sexually transmitted diseases, alcohol dependence and even certain cancers.

We look forward to working with you in improving the health and well-being of Oregonians, and strengthening our state's economy, and we urge you to vote against HB 2976.

Sincerely,
Lizzy Atwood Wills, Project Coordinator
The Oregon Alcohol Policy Alliance