



The Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials

April 20, 2023

House Rules Committee

Re: HB 3610

Chair Fahey and Members of the Committee:

Thank you so much for hearing HB 3610. The Coalition of Local Health Officials (CLHO) supports this legislation, as convening a table to discuss Oregon's alcohol taxes that includes all the pertinent stakeholders is of critical importance.

As you may know, Oregon has the 5th highest alcohol use rate in the country, and excessive alcohol consumption is the 3rd leading cause of preventable death among Oregonians, responsible for more than 2,100 deaths annually – up from 1300 deaths in 2013 – **and three times the number of deaths by other drug overdoses.**

Many of the stressors of the pandemic – increased isolation, lack of social interaction, increased uncertainty, stress, depression, and anxiety – contributed to an increase in excessive alcohol use and related deaths. In Oregon, the rate of death directly due to alcohol **increased 21%** during the first year of the pandemic.

Public health is all about prevention and prevention programs have never been fully funded, and this includes alcohol use prevention programs. To be clear, Ballot Measure 110 does not fund prevention, nor does any other dedicated source of state revenue. We believe the establishment of The Task Force on Alcohol Pricing and Addiction Services is the correct first step in the effort to create policy that will ultimately help to reduce excessive alcohol use through funding prevention programs, increase treatment services, and therefore, save lives.

We urge you to include public health as a named member of the Task Force and to pass this important legislation this session. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Lochner

Executive Director

Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials

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