

Testimony SUPPORTING HB 3610
Submitted by Oregon Recovers
April 20, 2023
House Committee On Rules

Chair Fahey, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, Vice-Chair Kropf, and Members of the House Committee On Rules:

My name is Tony Morse, and I serve as the Policy and Advocacy Director for Oregon Recovers. We are a movement of people in recovery from addiction focused on solving Oregon's addiction crisis. I'm also a person in long-term recovery, which for me means I've not had a drink in over 6 years.

I strongly urge you to vote in favor of HB 3610.

- This bill is a massive stride towards solving Oregon's addiction crisis. The Task Force that HB 3610 creates will help us better understand the full nature, scope, and extent of alcohol addiction in Oregon. And its work will position us to more effectively deliver lifesaving prevention and treatment services where they are needed most.
- Oregon Recovers would like to thank all co-sponsors of this bill for taking action on this matter of life and death. Representatives Sanchez and Nosse in particular should be acknowledged for their continued leadership regarding behavioral health issues.

We need this Task Force because our state has a drinking problem.

- Alcohol is by far the most lethal component of our addiction crisis. It kills 6 Oregonians per day, and claims more lives than all types of drug overdoses combined.
- Excessive alcohol use, which includes binge drinking and underage drinking, is Oregon's third-leading preventable cause of death and disease.
- Alcohol addiction is ubiquitous in Oregon. 12.34% of Oregonians age 12 and older are addicted to alcohol. This is the 5th highest rate in the nation, and means roughly 453,609 state residents age 12 and up have an alcohol use disorder. That's about 7,560 people—some of them kids—per Oregon House District.
- Excessive drinking cost our state \$4.8 billion in 2019, including \$2.19 billion in lost labor productivity. This kind of economic drain squeezes consumers and small businesses by driving up the cost of goods and services in Oregon. It also constrains the potential of economic investment legislation like CHIPS and SB 4.
- According to OHA, the percentage of adult women in Oregon who binge drink increased by over 77% between 2001 and 2021.

The composition of the Task Force and the scope of its study are foundationally sound, but expanding each would better serve the purpose of this bill.

Given the state of our crisis, it would be appropriate to add the following study subjects:

- The disproportionate level of harm that alcohol imposes on BIPOC and Tribal communities.
- Predatory alcohol product marketing, especially with regard to minors, women and BIPOC populations.
- The extent to which alcohol is involved in opioid and methamphetamine overdoses.
- The relationship between alcohol use and cancer rates, gun violence, suicide, crime and domestic violence.
- The role alcohol is playing in the state's homelessness crisis.
- The disproportionate harm created by distilled spirits compared to beer, cider and wine.

It would also be appropriate for the Task Force to include seats for additional stakeholders:

- BIPOC communities, especially those with lived experience relating to alcohol addiction.
- Tribal Communities, especially those with lived experience relating to alcohol addiction.
- Public health experts.
- Addiction medicine physicians.
- Representatives of the distilled spirits industry.

It's time to change our relationship with alcohol, and we can do so by passing HB 3610.

Thank you.