



February 5, 2025

Co-Chair Woods, Co-Chair Gomberg, and members of the committee,

My name is Oliver Coker, and I am the owner of the Keizer and Woodburn Liquor Stores. I currently serve as President of the Associated Liquor Stores of Oregon. I am testifying today on behalf of our association in favor of the OLCC budget.

The OLCC and liquor stores collaborate to maintain a robust control system for selling distilled spirits. I would like to emphasize a few items proposed in their budget.

Liquor stores support the completion of the new OLCC Distribution Center. Investments in the warehouse and IT systems will modernize the distribution center. The new distribution center's value lies in introducing efficiencies to the current system, sometimes chaotic due to outdated technology. Currently, the OLCC Distribution Center operates with systems that are 50 years old. Completing the new warehouse is expected to benefit all Oregonians by saving the State money and creating more efficiencies delivering distilled spirits to Oregon's 284 liquor stores.

Liquor stores are required to adhere to all liquor laws, similar to any other business selling alcohol beverages. Prior to 2020, the OLCC hosted annual training sessions for all liquor stores. During these trainings, the OLCC reviewed rules, operations, merchandising, and other relevant topics, providing educational experience. Also, before 2020, minor decoy compliance rates were traditionally 80% or higher for liquor stores. Though 80% is still not ideal, it is significantly better than the current rate of 68%. Minor decoy operations were halted in 2020 and did not resume until May of 2022. Instead of the investment in enforcement officers, I would propose investment in better training for the stores. A small investment in a Computer Based Training program which could be broadcasted to stores over the new Point of Sale investment being provided to stores in the IT package would be the smart investment. With a two-year period, I am confident that the compliance rate will improve. If this does not occur, then we should consider investing in enforcement measures.

The OLCC and liquor stores share a symbiotic relationship. From time to time, we may disagree, but this is healthy and in the end this relationship bonds even stronger. We look forward to continuing work with the OLCC to strengthen our control system even more.