

Submitter: Paul Meade

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety
Response

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3197

Dear Members of the Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety
Response,

For over 90 years, Columbia Distributing has proudly delivered Oregon's favorite local beer, wine and cider to restaurants, bars, grocers and convenience stores across this great state. Sadly, since the pandemic, many of our partners have shuttered. I urge you to oppose House Bill 3197, which is before your committee, as it would harm 1,000+ of Columbia's Oregon teammates, and every other legal-drinking-aged Oregonian.

With the highest cost increases in generations and no end in sight, a new, unprecedented 8% sales tax would only make it more difficult for Oregonians trying to make their hard-earned dollars stretch.

Oregon is home to more than 300 breweries, 900 wineries, 1,300 vineyards, 70 cideries, 73 distributors and 10,000 restaurants, creating hundreds of thousands of good-paying jobs and more than \$17 billion in economic activity for the state. Yet because of challenging times, with inflation, supply chain issues, employee shortages, a pandemic and fewer people drinking, we've lost more than 70 breweries, taprooms and brewpubs in the last two years alone.

HB 3197 states the additional revenue is needed for youth prevention, yet youth drinking is at an all-time low, a trend that's occurred for more than two decades as existing prevention programs are working. Alcohol taxes are already the third largest source of revenue for the state, yet only 3% goes to funding drug addiction and mental health. The legislature sends the rest to the general fund. Before increasing taxes on constituents, lawmakers should utilize existing revenue if youth drug addiction and recovery services are truly needed.

Lawmakers should not be raising prices through regressive sales taxes on constituents when we're already experiencing record highs. Please, don't advance HB 3197, which will only harm Oregonians and an industry that contributes so much to the states identity, culture and economy.

Thank you,
Paul Meade