

Submitter: Brian Pearce

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety  
Response

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3197

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 3197, which introduces a gradually increasing alcohol tax to strengthen youth addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts, including establishing and supporting Recovery High Schools. HB 3197 quite simply places more of the economic burden of treating alcohol abuse and its related costs on the consumers who use alcohol. It is no different than any other use tax, for which we have many.

Too many young Oregonians suffer from substance use each year. Our current system frequently shifts blame or downplays the true impacts of alcohol misuse to evade meaningful reforms. However, growing research indicates that even moderate consumption increases the risk of serious health issues, emphasizing the urgent need for comprehensive prevention and recovery resources. HB 3197 directly addresses this need by allocating new revenue to effective prevention and treatment strategies.

Oregon stands at a crossroads: our state must align its values with its practical needs, demonstrating that integrity lies not only in what is said but also in what is done. The time has come for decisive action—House Bill 3197 acknowledges that Oregon's noninterventionist approach to alcohol-related harm has inadequately protected our communities, especially our youth. By introducing a higher retail tax on alcoholic beverages and directing those funds toward prevention and support services, we can restore fairness and save countless lives. I respectfully urge you to pass HB 3197 and ensure it is enacted with the accountability and transparency that Oregonians expect and deserve.

I urge you to vote in favor of HB 3197 to help end cycles of untreated substance use disorders and to protect Oregon's youth. Thank you for your leadership and for considering my testimony.