

Submitter: Sonia Marie Leikam  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3940

I write to share my opposition to HB 3940. I understand the importance of creating more funding to fight wildfires in Oregon, but a beverage tax on Oregon's Bottle Bill is not the solution. And now is not the time. A beverage tax would raise food costs when Oregonians can least afford it. It's a beverage tax no matter how you do it – taking from or adding to the present deposit for a new purpose. If consumers don't receive their full deposit back or if the money is used for anything beyond the Bottle Bill, it's a tax – and a broken promise to Oregonians.

There are better ways to support wildfire funding than undermining our beloved recycling system. The Bottle Bill provides a way for us, like nearly 7,000 families, to save for college for our 3 kids by depositing our returns into their 529 plans. We also regularly fill up blue bags for the schools our kids attend, which provides a critical source of funding for the PTAs to be able to distribute classroom grants and create community events to bring us together.

Stacking a tax on top of the deposit and then telling customers they only get part of it back will create friction and confusion. Ultimately, placing a tax in the Bottle Bill will gut one of our most beloved statewide programs, lower trust in the Bottle Bill, and weaken the desire to participate. Taxing every Oregonian who buys a drink at a store is the wrong approach to supporting wildfire funding.