



Health Department

April 2, 2025

Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Subject: HB 3197 -2 - Add a new point-of-sale tax on beer, wine, and cider products in Oregon.

Co-Chairs Kropf and Prozanski, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to express Multnomah County Health Department's support for HB 3197 -2 which adds a new point-of-sale tax on beer, wine, and cider products in Oregon. Protecting health by preventing youth and excessive alcohol use aligns with our mission to advance health equity, protect the most vulnerable and promote health and wellness for everyone.

Young people in the United States use alcohol more than any other drugs. In Multnomah County, 61.5 percent of youth reported taking their first sips of alcohol under age twelve¹. Drinking has serious effects on young people's health and wellbeing. Underage drinking also puts kids safety and those around them at risk. Concerning is that young adults (ages 18-25) reporting binge drinking—consuming 5 drinks within a few hours—ranged from 26 to 33 percent between 2018-2023², which was higher than the Oregon average and higher than adults older than 25 in that same time period. Excessive alcohol use is a leading preventable cause of death, impacting everyone, especially families and friends. Sadly, in 2023, 225 Multnomah County community members lost their lives entirely attributable to alcohol use.

Multnomah County's Health Department is passionate about primary prevention—which seeks to delay and prevent youth from using substances like alcohol, cannabis, opioids, fentanyl, tobacco and other drugs—all of which can cause serious harm to a developing brain. Proven alcohol policies can reduce excessive drinking and its harmful effects like illness, injury and risk of dying sooner make alcohol less available, keep youth from using and increase the price with revenue dedicated to prevention and recovery programs.

HB 3197 -2 increases the price of beer, wine and cider at the point of sale, is a small tax on the consumer. While increasing the price is a policy mechanism intended to reduce access through cost, the small size of this tax may reduce some purchases, but the greater value is in the revenue and only if applied to critical programs to reverse our addiction crisis in Oregon through prevention and recovery best practices.

Multnomah County supports HB 3197-2 with a meaningful portion of these funds dedicated to fund primary prevention programs. If you invested in this way, we would implement evidence-based programs in partnership with schools that gives children and families the tools and skills they need to build their self-esteem, establish healthy coping mechanisms and good decision making, reduce substance use, absenteeism, bullying, violence, depression, anxiety, and suicide ideation. Primary prevention provides a serious return on investment, especially when the investment is 2 percent of the alcohol cost. On a \$10 purchase, that's a mere 20 cents to save a life. The funds would also be used to fund youth treatment and recovery, of which our state is in very short supply.

We know that raising taxes is politically difficult, but we have confidence in you—and your constituents will back you up. According to the latest Oregon Health Authority [adult health survey](#), 85% of Oregonians think alcohol is a serious threat to society and nearly half (45%) say drinking has caused trouble in their families.

We need you to step up and do this very difficult thing to improve health outcomes for our youth, young adults and families.. Thank you.

Please reach out to me if you have any further questions.

Thank you,



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¹[2022 Student Health Survey](#)

²Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)