



## **PUBLIC HEALTH**

PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

Friday, April 4, 2025

Re: HB 3197 -2 Support

Dear Co-Chairs Kropf and Prozanski and Committee members,

Lane County is providing this letter in support of HB 3197-2 which will add a new point-of-sale tax on beer, wine, and cider products in Oregon.

This proposal balances affordability for consumers with the need to generate significant revenue to address Oregon's addiction crisis. While small, this tax applied at the register starts at 2 percent and will gradually increase to 8 percent ensuring minimal impact on consumers while raising critical funds for programs that address our state's addiction crisis. The data provided by the Legislative Fiscal Office, estimates a 2 percent tax would raise \$77 million per biennium, 4 percent will raise \$144 million, and 8 percent will raise \$222 million. Additionally, the -2 amendment exempts small breweries from the tax, safeguarding Oregon's valued local establishments.

At Lane County Public Health, we are committed to primary prevention, which aims to delay or prevent youth from using substances like alcohol, cannabis, opioids, tobacco and other drugs all of which has been extensively researched and shown to harm developing brains. We urge that a portion of these funds be used to fund primary prevention programs through local public health per HB 2954. Investing in this approach would allow for implementation of evidence-based programs in partnership with schools, equipping youth with essential skills to build self-esteem, develop healthy coping mechanisms, and make informed decisions. These programs have been shown to reduce substance use, absenteeism, bullying, violence, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. Primary prevention offers a strong return on investment, particularly when funded through a modest 2 percent tax on alcohol. For just 20 cents on a \$10 purchase, this investment can support programs that prevent youth substance use, strengthen mental health, and reduce the long-term harms of addiction.

Raising taxes is often a political challenge, but lawmakers can move forward with confidence, knowing Lane County constituents support action on this issue. Since 1998, Lane County Health & Human Services has conducted surveys to assess residents' attitudes toward various health issues and risk behaviors with negative health impacts. In 2009, the survey introduced a question asking whether respondents would support an additional 25 cent charge per serving of wine or beer if the funds were directed toward local alcohol prevention and treatment services. Over time, support for this measure has grown, with 69% of respondents expressing willingness to pay more for alcohol in 2022, the highest percentage recorded.

The increase in alcohol sales tax is not solely a financial policy, but an evidence-based public health intervention that can have far-reaching positive effects on individual, community and population health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jocelyn T. Warren". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jocelyn T. Warren  
Public Health Administrator