



Clatsop County

Board of Commissioners

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April 11, 2025

Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support House Bill 2954 – A Crucial Step Toward Strengthening Prevention Efforts Across Oregon

Co-Chairs Kropf and Prozanski and Members of the Committee,

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners strongly supports House Bill 2954 and urges its passage to secure critical funding for Addiction Primary Prevention initiatives across Oregon, addressing the urgent need for expanded prevention resources statewide.

Oregon is facing an urgent substance use crisis, with over 12,000 deaths annually from alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs. Despite this crisis, our state invests only 6% of its substance use budget in prevention efforts, leaving critical gaps in resources. A 2022 analysis revealed a staggering 94% shortage in the prevention specialist workforce statewide, significantly undermining our ability to combat substance use effectively.

In Clatsop County, we have seen firsthand the challenges our youth face with social, family, and peer pressures related to substance use. Our prevention specialists have worked diligently with schools and youth organizations to meaningfully engage young people, but we need additional resources to sustain and expand these efforts. As youth have shared with us, “drugs and alcohol are everywhere,” and ongoing, robust prevention initiatives are essential for addressing this pervasive issue.

HB 2954 presents a much-needed solution, proposing \$25 million per biennium to enable counties and tribes to hire dedicated prevention staff. This investment will empower local public health agencies to implement effective strategies such as prevention education, youth leadership development, and family support. With a trained and experienced workforce proficient in prevention science, we can successfully equip our youth with the tools to resist substance use and thrive.

Substance use disorder takes a devastating emotional and economic toll, costing our society an estimated \$6 billion each year. Investing in prevention is not only a moral imperative but also a cost-effective approach that delivers long-term benefits for healthier communities. The time for decisive action is now and HB 2954 helps pave the way for a brighter future for Oregon’s youth and communities.

For these reasons, we strongly urge your YES vote on HB 2954 to invest in local efforts and drive meaningful progress in addiction prevention throughout Oregon.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Mark Kujala, Chair
District 1



Anthony Huacuja, Commissioner
District 2



Pamela Wev, Commissioner
District 3



Courtney Bangs, Vice Chair
District 4



Lianne Thompson, Commissioner
District 5