

Submitter:

Donna Maebori

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB3940

Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Reschke and Walters, and Committee Members,

Regarding HB 3940, there has been considerable attention paid to the consequences of a surcharge on beverage container purchases by beverage companies, and with good reason. It would adversely affect the Bottle Bill program, which is vital for many individuals and charities. Can this option be eliminated from SB 3940? As Willamette Week reported, in late March a coalition of environmental groups and businesses submitted a letter to lawmakers asking for its removal from the bill. The group was quoted as saying:

“We understand the importance of creating more funding to fight wildfires in Oregon, but a beverage tax in 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.”

Apart from this surcharge option, the other five choices for revenue appear viable and worth considering. The need for funding sources to address wildfire prevention and response is urgent and immediate. It seems vitally important that this bill becomes law, but equally vitally important that it does so after elimination of the option for a surcharge on beverage containers.

Thank you.