

Submitter: Lisa Jones

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB702

Good day, Chairman and Committee. My name is Lisa Jones and I am the owner of Smoke This, a tobacco store located in Bend, Oregon. I have owned my family run business for over 25 years here in Central Oregon and I am writing to you today asking for you to oppose Senate Bill 702.

My store is designated a retail Tobacco Store, I do also sell beer and wine, non-alcoholic beverages, some snacks and convenience items. 75% of my customers come in for some form of tobacco products. If this bill passes and gives only OLCC Liquor Stores the ability to sell flavored tobacco products, it will take approximately 35% of my sales away. Someone coming in to buy a flavored vape will be forced to go to the liquor store, not only will I lose out on that sale, but also on them purchasing their beer and a bag of chips from me. Where am I supposed to make up that 35% profit to make my business sustainable and to be able to pay my long-term lease, utilities and my employees?

It is unfair to redirect the flavored tobacco sales to only Liquor Stores, it is not a level playing field and will destroy many businesses. The logistics of it do not even make sense. In Bend we have 5 liquor stores, some of which are very small. Where are they going to merchandise and store all the flavored tobacco products that the community wants to purchase? For example, in a one-mile radius of my store there are at least 9 other retailers like me. If we all lose the right to sell flavored tobacco products and those customers must all go to the only liquor store in the vicinity, that could be hundreds more customers for that one liquor store to handle daily, are they equipped to handle that volume and do they even want that responsibility?

In my research liquor stores over all have had a much higher percentage of underage sales than tobacco stores and with this bill creating greater customer volume at the liquor store, that number is sure to go up. As a tobacco retailer I take my responsibility very seriously. I require ID from anyone looking under the age of 30 and scan it into my point-of-sale system. In my opinion this bill is a bad idea and would prove to be more harmful in the future. It is unfair to the thousands of us retailers who have built up our business over the years to have the State take away a large percentage from our business. It will force many retailers to close their doors, and many employees will lose their jobs. It makes more sense to keep the sales of all tobacco products in the hands of licensed Tobacco Retailers.

Please, I urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill 702.

Thank you!