

- My name is Ron Squires, President of Rich & Rhine Wholesale in Portland, OR.
- We employ over 50 people and we offer medical and 401k to our employees. *We are not Big Tobacco*
- House Bill 2270 would endanger ~~and~~ our employees' lively hoods as well as our customers.
- The 10 drivers we have on the road everyday will become a target for criminals. *\$100,000 or more on a truck*
- When Washington State raised the cigarette tax by \$20.00 a carton years ago, SW Washington never recovered the business that was lost.
- Oregon border business did increase.
- This is a regressive ~~tax~~ *Tax that pushes* those least able to afford it and drive tax dollars from Oregon across the river to Washington. It would also drive sales to Ilani tobacco shops or online sales where tax dollars are not collected. *20 minutes away*
- As a distributor, we are actively working to diversify our product portfolio so that convenience store shoppers in Oregon have increased access to more fresh, healthy, natural, and organic foods. This is a process that takes time as we educate our accounts to better reflect the changing needs of Oregonians. Transitioning 40% of our sales to non-tobacco products is a realistic goal, but it will not happen overnight. Neither should this tax. *None of us want higher Taxes*
- To enact a \$2.00/pack increase would cause stores to close, people to lose jobs, and negate many of the long-term efforts we are pursuing that would make convenience/independent grocers a better destination for healthy choices.
- If you do determine it necessary to raise the taxes on tobacco products in Oregon, please consider a model akin to the minimum wage increase, which was nearly a 60% increase (\$9.25-\$14.75) staggered over 6.5 years to minimize the impact on local businesses committed to offering fair wages to their employees in a fiscally-responsible manner. *This would alleviate some concerns on Safety and loss of business.*

