

Legislation Text

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A RESOLUTION calling on the Washington state Legislature to help improve the health of King County and Washington state residents by maintaining current levels of funding for foundational public health services and by providing new, additional funding for public health, dedicated revenue from a new tax on electronic vaping devices, and encouraging other boards of health to adopt similar resolutions in support of public health funding.

WHEREAS, every Washingtonian has the right to expect a strong network of local public health jurisdictions and a basic level of public health services, and

WHEREAS, prevention and public health contributions such as safe drinking water and immunizations have led to the greatest historical increases in life expectancy, and

WHEREAS, public health plays a critical public safety role protecting all Washingtonians, and

WHEREAS, an effective public health infrastructure is essential to decreasing the burden of chronic disease and ensuring our children are healthy and ready to learn, and

WHEREAS, those most essential services that protect everyone - immunizations, water and food safety, communicable disease prevention and services to vulnerable children and families - must remain strong, and

WHEREAS, there is a continued need to protect people from communicable diseases, whether Ebola, Enterovirus or E. coli, and other public health threats, and

WHEREAS, this funding is an immediate, urgent need and is essential to keeping the public health system operational, and

WHEREAS, funding and delivering foundational public health services and additional important

services is a shared responsibility between the state and local governments, and

WHEREAS, many local governments have stepped up to ensure this critical component of the broader public safety system in Washington state and King County remain functional, and

WHEREAS, substantial efforts are underway to ensure that the public health successes of the 20th century are carried forward by a nimble, sustainable, responsive, cost-effective and accountable 21st century public health system, and

WHEREAS, new electronic vaping devices are an emerging health hazard for children and youth, and

WHEREAS, calls to the Washington Poison Center regarding to child nicotine poisonings related to electronic vaping devices has increased six hundred percent in the last few years, and

WHEREAS, ingesting even a mouthful of liquid nicotine intended for electronic vaping devices is highly toxic for children, and can cause vomiting, nausea, seizures and in extreme cases death, and

WHEREAS, liquid nicotine flavors for electronic vaping devices appeal strongly to youth, and

WHEREAS, youth and young adults are more susceptible to nicotine addiction than adults and nicotine has lasting adverse effects on adolescent brain development, and

WHEREAS, electronic vaping devices are currently unlicensed and unregulated, and

WHEREAS, vapor products are currently much cheaper than traditional cigarettes are not taxed, and

WHEREAS, young people are twice as price sensitive as adults to increases in tobacco prices making taxation an effective strategy to curb use by youth and young adults;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Health of King County:

A. The King County Board of Health calls upon the Washington state Legislature to maintain at least the current level of state funding for the public health system in the 2015-2017 biennial budget;

B. The King County Board of Health calls upon the Washington state Legislature to provide new, additional funding to stabilize the state's communicable disease prevention and response system;

C. The King County Board of Health calls upon the Washington state Legislature to tax electronic

vaping devices and dedicate a portion of the revenue to the state's public health system; and

D. The King County Board of Health strongly encourages other local boards of health in Washington to adopt similar resolutions.