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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE FROM OREGON PARTNERSHIP*****

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OREGON PARTNERSHIP SUPPORTS LONG- OVERDUE INCREASE IN MINUSCULE BEER TAX!

(Portland, Oregon) Oregon Partnership, a non-profit group dedicated to combating alcohol and drug abuse, has thrown its support behind an increase in the Oregon beer tax, which hasn't been raised in 32 years.

"Now is the time," says Kaleen Deatherage, Vice President of Oregon Partnership, who will be testifying this morning before a hearing of the Oregon House Revenue Committee in Salem.

The measure sponsored by Rep. Ben Cannon (D-Portland) would increase the less-than-a-penny tax on a 12-ounce can or bottle of beer to 15 cents.

The increase would raise approximately \$320 million in the next two years to be used for alcohol prevention, treatment and recovery services as well as about \$100-million for the general fund.

"All told, substance abuse costs Oregon taxpayers \$5.93 billion – that's BILLION – in 2006," says Deatherage. "Because of this, we have less to invest in critical areas like education, healthcare, and infrastructure."

Deatherage asks why one of the smallest beer taxes in the nation has remained so sacred, and hasn't been raised since 1977.

Oregon Partnership maintains it is realistic and efficient to fund prevention and addiction services with revenues from the sale of the product that creates the problem. And jobs will be created in those areas.

Evidence at other states shows that an increase in the beer tax would not change the overall amount of beer consumed, except for two groups – price-sensitive adolescents and teens and heavy drinkers. There is no evidence that jobs will be lost among local brewers.

"Heavy drinkers created the greatest social and economic costs of alcohol abuse – a price now shouldered by every taxpayer in our state," says Deatherage. "An increase in the cost recovery fee on beer would decrease that price."

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