

The Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust Fund Board of Directors
Resolution "Increasing State Excise Taxes on Tobacco Products"
April 16, 2003

Whereas tobacco use kills an estimated 6,000 Oklahomans each year and Oklahoma has one of the highest percentages of smoking-related deaths in the nation; and

Whereas tobacco use is Oklahoma's leading cause of preventable death and is responsible for more deaths than alcohol, car accidents, AIDS, suicides, murders, and illegal drugs combined; and

Whereas tobacco use is a major cause of heart disease, cancer, stroke, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD); and

Whereas thirty-two percent of Oklahoma high school students and sixteen percent of Oklahoma middle school students use tobacco products, and half of these youth would like to quit; and

Whereas among Oklahoma children now under the age of 18, an estimated 77,943 will die prematurely as a result of tobacco addiction; and

Whereas seventy-six percent of Oklahoma adult smokers began smoking regularly in their teens and three out of four adult smokers in Oklahoma would like to quit smoking; and

Whereas the cigarette consumption rate in Oklahoma is 108 packs per person per year, compared with the national rate of 82 packs per person and only 38 packs per person in California; and

Whereas the estimated costs of tobacco use in Oklahoma exceed \$2 billion annually or approximately \$600 per capita; and

Whereas a ten percent increase in price leads to a decline in cigarette consumption of four percent overall, seven percent among pregnant women and thirteen percent among youth; and

Whereas Oklahoma has the 40th lowest cigarette excise tax in the nation; and

Whereas any significant increase in the excise tax on tobacco products could generate substantial income and it is estimated that a \$1 per pack increase would generate approximately \$185 million in increased revenue in the first year alone; and

Whereas the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust Fund will not have enough earnings to fully support an effective, statewide tobacco use prevention and cessation program for at least ten years, even if all the earnings were allocated for this purpose;

Be it now resolved that the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust Fund Board of Directors urges the Oklahoma State Legislature and the people of Oklahoma to support a significant increase in the excise tax on tobacco products, at least to the national average, in order to save lives and save money by dramatically reducing tobacco consumption, particularly among youth, and to provide essential funding for an effective statewide tobacco use prevention and cessation program as well as other health related needs within the State of Oklahoma.