

Oregon receives almost \$2 million in tobacco loot

Attorney General Hardy Myers announced that Oregon will receive \$1,994,780 from tobacco companies in a settlement of pending disputes under the Master Settlement Agreement.

The bulk of the money will come from Brown and Williamson, the nation's third largest tobacco manufacturer.

The 1998 Master Settlement Agreement required all of the major tobacco companies to pay

\$206 billion to the states over the first 25 years of the agreement.

The payment to the state comes as part of a new, global settlement reached for \$160 million between the 52 states and jurisdictions and most of the nation's tobacco manufacturers.

The agreement resolves Brown and Williamson's failure to make payments to the states for the cigarettes it manufactured for Star Tobacco,

Inc., a company that refused to join the settlement.

On behalf of the other states, the Attorney General of Vermont sued Brown and Williamson over the payments last December.

As part of the settlement, all major tobacco manufacturers agreed they will take responsibility for cigarettes they manufacture for other companies.

The settlement also avoids complex disputes

over whether the 1998 settlement was a "significant factor" in causing the market share of the companies that signed it to decline during the first four years of the agreement.

That issue had threatened to drag on into years of costly litigation, Attorney General Myers said.

Instead, the settlement avoids claims from the tobacco companies that might have reached as much as \$1 billion.



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