

**Testimony of Scott Klag, Senior Planner
In Support of Senate Bill 1512
House Committee on Energy, Environment and Water
February 23, 2012**



Co-Chair Bailey, Co-Chair Gilliam and members of the Committee:

My name is Scott Klag, Senior Planner with Metro's Resource Conservation and Recycling division. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of Senate Bill 1512.

Metro is the regional government of the Portland metropolitan area and among our major responsibilities is management of the region's solid waste system. Our responsibilities are very broad and include: developing a regional plan to meet state-mandated recycling goals; franchising and licensing solid waste facilities; supporting and coordinating local government recycling programs; and providing extensive – and expensive – household hazardous waste services.

Over the past several years, the use of fluorescent lights, especially compact bulbs (CFLs), has steadily grown. They have been heavily promoted as a way to save energy and consumers have responded. However, fluorescent lighting must contain some amount of mercury to operate. Because mercury is a persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic pollutant, Oregon policy makers have supported programs and enacted statutes to reduce the impact of products containing mercury.

Metro recognizes the need to provide environmentally sound opportunities to recycle these lights and does so through our household hazardous waste services. While manufacturers have reduced the amount of mercury in many lamps, Metro believes additional efforts to lower mercury content and ensure greater opportunities for consumers to recycle their lamps are warranted.

SB 1512 takes important steps toward improving how mercury containing lamps are managed in Oregon. It sets mercury content standards for the more commonly used general purpose lamps sold and establishes state procurement guidelines for lighting purchases.

Last session, Metro testified on SB 529 that would have required manufacturers who sell CFLs and fluorescent tubes in Oregon to establish a convenient and environmentally responsible collection system for these lamps. We continue to support that approach and believe SB 1512 can help move Oregon in that direction.

Metro urges passage of SB 1512.