

Representative Susan McLain
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RE: HB 2509-Single Use Plastic Bag Ban

Dear Chair Helm and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to you in support of House Bill 2509, which would ban single use plastic bags. This bill is needed to help us start reducing the amount of plastic in our waste stream and environment. We cannot continue to use plastic bags because there is not adequate ability to recycle the thin plastic material leading them remain in landfills and ecosystems indefinitely.

Our world is being negatively impacted by the use of plastic bags and packaging in our retail businesses. Plastic hurts all landscapes in our world. The oceans and other bodies of water are being clogged and damaged. Fish and other creatures are being hurt along with their and ecosystems and food chains.

An estimated 500 billion plastic bags are used worldwide each year. 100 billion of which are used in the US. These bags will never completely biodegrade, and there are few options for recycling them. Inevitably, these bags make their way into our environment. They clog up our storm drains and sewers, pollute our waterways, and mar our beautiful landscapes. Land and water animals often eat or nest with plastic bags, which can make them sick and often kill them. According to Environment Oregon, 44% of all seabirds, 43% of all marine mammals and 86% of all sea turtles have ingested plastic.

Single use plastic bags are some of the most difficult forms of plastic to recycle. Most recycling facilities can't take them because they can get caught in machinery and clog up the process. Eliminating plastic bag use in Oregon is an important step to cleaning up our environment and protecting its long term health.

My local jurisdictions of Forest Grove and Hillsboro have been leaders in the state by instituting local bans on single use bags. I am so proud of the Hillsboro Youth Advisory Council and Speech and Debate students who have worked so diligently to pass these progressive policy initiatives. Their hard work and passion are inspiring as they fight to pass on an earth better than the one they received.

Oregon needs to join Forest Grove and Hillsboro and the many other cities across the state in leading the way to provide cleaner water and better futures for our children and grandchildren.

Thank You,

Susan McLain

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