

FAR WEST RECYCLING



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Hello,

My name is Vinod Singh and I am the Outreach Manager at Far West Recycling. We have sorting facilities located in Hillsboro and Portland that accept and sort recyclables. Thank you for providing us the opportunity to comment on the topic of plastic bag reduction efforts, House Bill 2509.

We are supportive of the Sustainable Shopping Initiative and efforts to reduce the amount of plastic bags in use for a couple reasons. To begin with, often discussed are the litter and debris impacts of plastic bags. Reducing the use of plastic bags may facilitate long term changes and reduce the negative impact these materials currently have on the environment.

Additionally, the negative impact they have on the recyclable materials sorting process is significant. Although not included in the curbside commingled recycling programs, many of the bags end up as a contaminant incorrectly placed into curbside recycling carts because of the chasing arrows logo or just a desire to see the material recycled, this is sometimes called “wishful recycling.” These materials create many inefficiencies throughout the system. They tangle and wrap around the machinery creating shut-downs and increased maintenance. Employees have no other option but to lock out the machinery on a regular basis to physically cut the bags out of the mechanical sorting screens. The bags also draw away efforts of the quality control employees from their other areas of focus; while attempting to stop the bags from entering the sorting screens, or to remove the bags that made it to the downstream sorting lines, they may miss the opportunity to capture other materials properly. The reduction of these materials in the commingled recyclables stream will help increase the efficiencies of our systems. Furthermore, once removed from the line, these materials do not have a consistent end market for recycling and are currently going to the landfill. “Wishful recycling” is not recycling, it is expensive disposal.

We have been part of the community for many years and hope that our support on this issue helps achieve the ongoing efforts to promote thoughtful consumption, decreased waste, and recycling right.

Thank you,

Vinod Singh
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