



Dear Chair Ken Helm and members of the Committee

HB 2509 OPPOSE banning single-use bags

I regret that I am unable to attend - unable meaning I am physically disabled. That means I am not able to handle bags without handles. I live alone and pride myself in being independent and not be a draw on social benefits. However, state and local laws accumulate and make it very difficult to maintain my independence when passing laws that have consequences.

The real issue is that the reasoning for banning plastic is faulty. Research shows paper bags are more hazardous to the environment in the long run. Producing them creates more greenhouse gases and destroys trees. Also creates more water pollution. Unless exposed to the right conditions of air and sun, paper bags biodegrade at almost the same rate as the plastic bags. And paper emits more toxic fumes when decomposing than plastic. It takes more energy to recycle paper than plastic, and paper bags take up more space in the landfills. Industry wise, there are more by-products made from recycled plastics than paper.

Some people are encouraging biodegradable plastic bags, but there is also research out there that shows that these plastic bags emit more toxic gases than regular plastic bags. Of course, reusable fabric bags would be one viable solution but they are also a breeding ground for bad molds and bacteria. Honestly, how many people take the time to wash their fabric bags every time they use them? Mold is a growing allergy, and fabric bags in busy families with children has the potential to increase school absentee rates.

If the reason is loose plastic in waters and landscape, what research has been done for the source of that plastic. The Pacific garbage patches are not contributed to Oregon. Will this bill really help anything except make life more difficult? How many animals are seriously injured or killed by plastic bags in or from Oregon? I don't think you can name one.

Then there is the mandated charge with exception that amounts to a tax considering it is mandated. Why mandate a charge? Let the market place figure it out. You should only mandate a maximum charge allowable. What is the purpose of a mandated minimum charge when the state doesn't see any of it. This appears to be illegally meddling in the market place functions.

The mandate is unenforceable if customers gather plastic bags throughout the store and not at checkout. Section 1 (4)(b)

Identifying plastic bags as "Single-use" is rarely true except for paper as they are often destroyed with a single use where there are many reuses for plastic bags keeping them from landfills until reused. Paper bags go directly to the landfill meaning more garbage collected with economic consequences.

If the reason for this ban is based on "environmental" issues, then I seriously question how much research has gone in to this argument. Passing a bill that seriously affects our economy without scientific research is irresponsible and lacks due diligence. It is an overreach of government without due cause.

Vote NO on HB 2509.

Donna Bleiler