

From: [GPSEN RCE](#)
To: [HEE Exhibits](#); [Rep Helm](#); [Rep Reschke](#); [Rep Schouten](#); [Rep Findley](#); [Rep Salinas](#); [Rep Sollman](#); [Rep Wilde](#); [Rep Williams](#); [Rep Zika](#)
Subject: Our support for the Statewide Plastic Bag Bill (HB 2509)
Date: Thursday, April 4, 2019 12:49:40 PM

Respected representatives at the House Committee on Energy and Environment,

I am writing this on behalf of the Greater Portland Sustainability Education Network ([GPSEN](#)), a [UNU Regional Center of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development](#) serving communities and stakeholders in Oregon.

As a sustainability organization, we are aware of the challenges posed by the use of plastic bags to the health of our planet's ecosystems, particularly to the oceans and its species. We are aware that the health of the oceans is critical to the planet's health, and to our own well being as human species. With only [9% of the world's plastic being recycled](#), a simple act of not adding another plastic bag to the ecosystem can have a significant impact on our planet, its many species, including us.

Hence we request you to take the lead in supporting the HB 2509 the "Sustainable Shopping Initiative" including the 10 cents pass-through charge for paper bags and thick, reusable plastic bags. The 10 cent charge is a proven effective method to incentivize reusable bag use and decrease the use of paper bags. In Portland, one of the few cities in Oregon that does not charge a fee, paper bag usage increased by 491% in the first year of implementation. Plastic checkout bags are a public nuisance and cause harm to Oregon's beautiful lands and waters. Not only do they harm wildlife, but also cause contamination at recycling and composting facilities and are costly to clean up. Sixteen local communities in Oregon have already passed plastic bag ordinances (and many more are in the process of doing so) to limit plastic pollution, and the local and public support for a statewide bill is overwhelming. The private sector is also taking the initiative to reduce plastic bag pollution. Kroger, the 2nd largest grocery retailer in the US after Walmart, announced they are phasing out plastic carry-home bags by 2025. Many other states including Washington and New Jersey are considering statewide plastic bag policies and Oregon should be a leader in the fight to protect the environment.

Please pass the Sustainable Shopping Initiative Bill, with full knowledge that you have our support for this initiative that will make Oregon a leader and engage all of us to participate for a better and healthier future.

Should you have any questions, please do contact me.

Looking forward,

Neeraja

--

Dr. Neeraja Havaligi
Executive Director
[Greater Portland Sustainability Education Network](#)
A UN University [Regional Center of Expertise](#)
In Education for Sustainable Development
Courtesy Faculty at Oregon State University
Environmental Science Graduate Program
www.neeraja.net

www.linkedin.com/in/biodiversity

1-925-216-1826 (c)

Skype: bio.diversity