



Advocacy · Education · Empowerment

May 22, 2019

Senate Committee on Rules  
900 Court St. NE,  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Burdick and Members of the Committee;

The Oregon State Council for Retired Citizens and United Seniors of Oregon are non-profit, non-partisan organizations dedicated to advocating for a good, quality of life for seniors and people with disabilities. Our organizations support HB 2509 but respectfully requests that you work to remove the paper bag fee that will disadvantage those on fixed income including Oregon seniors.

We must address the impact of plastic on our environment. Banning single-use plastic bags in Oregon seems like a commonsense step to help diminish the amount of plastic pollution in our waterways and oceans. However, we fail to see the sense in burdening Oregon consumers with a paper bag fee as a condition for bill passage.

Oregon grocers historically have not charged for paper. Even in instances where plastic has been banned, such as in our largest city Portland, grocers have not instituted a paper bag fee. If grocers have not taken that step, it seems strange that our state government would do so particularly when you consider the potential impact to fixed income consumers.

Five or ten cents per paper bag may not sound like much but it can easily add up for folks to whom every dollar matter. It is also worth noting that there is nothing to prevent grocers from hiking the paper bag fee at any time they choose. This bill sets a floor for what Oregonians will pay, who knows where the ceiling will be.

In times where the costs of groceries are already on the rise, we do not need an additional regressive add on to Oregonian's grocery bills. We believe that seniors and Oregonians struggling to get by are the ones that should be protected, not the bottom line of huge grocery chains.

Thank you,

*Steve Weiss*

Steve Weiss  
Board President  
Oregon State Council for Retired Citizens