



May 29, 2019

Senator Ginny Burdick, Chair,  
Senator Baertschiger Jr., Vice-Chair,  
Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Rules

RE: Support for HB 2509 - Sustainable Shopping Initiative

The Northwest Grocery Association supports HB 2509, which establishes a sustainable shopping initiative for the State of Oregon. This carefully crafted legislation is the result of years of policy development at the local level, and contains two key components that will make the policy successful: the inclusion of a required pass through fee on recycled paper bags and a ban on plastic bags for all retailers at the check-out counter.

The objective of HB 2509 is to implement a statewide solution to single-use plastic bags by reducing their consumption and lessening their pervasiveness among overall litter in Oregon. Our support for this bill is a commitment to do more for our environment and our full support hinges on the inclusion of the pass through fee for a recyclable paper bag. The bill before you today is a true compromise between the environmental and business communities, and the fee helps achieve the goal of the policy in the following ways:

- It is a gentle reminder to the consumer to remember their reusable bags without being punitive.
- It is avoidable and not a tax or fee paid to the government.
- It protects the retailer and the consumer that uses reusable bags from the cost shift of going from plastic to paper bags.
- It allows a retailer to provide an inexpensive, environmentally friendly bag when a customer does not have a reusable bag with them.

Merely banning plastic and allowing paper bags without a pass through fee increases grocery costs by an estimated \$35,000 to \$60,000 per store, depending on the size of the store. Plastic bag policies that fail to provide an incentive to move to reusable bags will raise retailers' bag costs and simply shift the problem from one single-use bag to another. Cities throughout the Northwest that have implemented these policies to encourage reusable bag use show positive results in the change in consumer behavior.

NWGA encourages your support for HB 2509. Its passage would be a win-win for the environmental and business communities.

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