



Department of Solid Waste

61050 SE 27th Street • Bend, Oregon 97702
(541) 317-3163
FAX (541) 317-3959

To: Oregon Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

From: Timm Schimke, Director of Solid Waste

Date: April 8, 2021

Re: Written testimony on Senate Bill 582

Chair Beyer, Vice-Chair Findley and members of the committee

I am writing today in support of Senate Bill 582. I am the Director of the Department of Solid Waste for Deschutes County, and I served on the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Recycling Steering Committee (RSC) that developed the concept for Senate Bill 582.

The Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) approach is the key element in our efforts to modernize Oregon's recycling system. Although it is a very extensive EPR approach, I would like to stress that it is by no means a new or untested approach. Oregon already has EPR systems in place for electronics and paint. We have learned a great deal implementing those programs and I believe that Oregon and DEQ are well suited to expand the EPR approach as proposed in the Bill. There are more than 100 existing state EPR programs in the United States. The RSC looked at a number of those programs in this country as well as Canada and Europe. It was our intent to pull the best aspects of these various programs into the Oregon approach and I feel we have accomplished that. We are not reinventing the wheel here.

Much of the recyclable material collected today that is considered contamination has value and is only being handled as contamination due to the difficulty in separating those commodities, however assistance from producers is vital to accomplishing that separation and getting those materials to market. This is an area that is very economically challenging for ratepayer-funded programs. This bill and the EPR approach will provide the funding necessary to access those markets with quality material.

Please give serious consideration to Senate Bill 582 and move it forward. The future of Oregon's recycling system depends on this bill. As I have stated before, if we are not taking bold steps to move forward as provided in the bill, we are moving backward and our system will continue to decay and the burden on rate payers will increase to an unacceptable level.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments