

**Testimony of Scott Klag, Senior Solid Waste Planner
In Support of House Bill 2955
House Committee on Energy and Environment
February 10, 2021**



Chair Marsh and Members of the Committee:

Metro is the regional government of the Portland metropolitan area, with major responsibilities for managing the region's solid waste and providing opportunities for recycling and waste reduction. Metro serves a population of almost 1.7 million, providing services and educational resources that protect the environment and reduce the amount and toxicity of the solid waste stream.

HB 2955 would establish a statewide product stewardship program for household hazardous waste: dangerous products many of us have under our sinks or in our garages or basements that require special handling and disposal. Examples include flammable products like solvents; toxic home and garden products like herbicides or pesticides; and highly corrosive or reactive products like oven cleaners and pool chemicals. If these products are not properly stored and managed, they pose risks to children from poisonings, to solid waste workers on collection routes and at disposal facilities from chemical reactions or releases, and to the environment from spills or through other pathways.

Metro conducted its first special collection event for household hazardous waste in 1986. In the more than three decades since then, we have developed a program that served more than 62,000 customers in 2020. However, even with such a robust program, a lot of hazardous materials are still not being properly managed in our region. Service levels and collections are even lower in less densely populated areas of the state.

State and local governments and solid waste rate payers currently bear the cost of safely managing and disposing household hazardous waste and have done so for decades. It is time for manufacturers to take responsibility for the hazardous products they sell and cover the cost of these needed programs.

Under product stewardship, the makers of products take responsibility for properly managing their products' leftovers. This is not only fair, but also provides an incentive for producers to reduce the impact of their products. Product stewardship programs in Oregon for electronic waste and paint have benefitted residents and the environment. However, we recognize that "one size does not fit all." A stewardship program for household hazardous waste will need to reflect the nature of the products and the industries that manufacture them.

HB 2955 establishes key elements of a statewide product stewardship program for household hazardous waste including: identifying what products would be covered; financing the program through cost internalization; setting program convenience and performance requirements; and building on the HHW infrastructure local governments and the state have already developed.

Metro believes HB 2955 will benefit all Oregonians. We urge you to move it forward.