

To: Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
From: Jeanne Roy, 6805 SW 12th Ave, Portland, OR 97219
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Subject: SB 582, Modernizing Oregon's Recycling System

I have been a recycling educator and advocate in Oregon for almost 50 years. In the early years of curbside recycling, the system got better and better. But since local governments initiated mixed recycling in one cart, the system has gotten worse and worse. There are a number of reasons:

- The primary reason is that there is too much contamination. People put items in the cart if they think it should be recyclable even if it's not on the accepted list.
- The chasing arrows on the bottom of plastic containers partially explain the confusion.
- Because our paper and plastic bales were so contaminated, China stopped taking them. Even domestic mills balked.
- The generation of materials has changed. In the early days, the largest component of materials was newspaper. Since it was valuable in the markets, its price in the markets could compensate for low-value materials. But now newspaper constitutes a small portion of the materials. On the other hand, plastic packaging has increased, particularly non-recyclable plastic, such as clamshells, boxes, and pouches.
- The system is not uniform throughout the state. After the China market disappeared, some communities stopped accepting certain materials.

Because a rigorous, two-year consensus stakeholder process facilitated by the DEQ led to this bill, SB 582 should be passed this session.

There are many important components to the bill. The three that are most important to me are these:

- Removal of misleading labels on plastic containers, like the chasing arrows
- Effective feedback to households and businesses to reduce contamination
- Packaging producers being required to pay a fee to cover the cost of improving the recycling system. The industry has continued to invent new types of packaging with no responsibility for its ultimate disposal. It is time that it do so.