

I am so proud to live in a state like Oregon that has a long tradition of thinking big to help protect our environment.

I strongly support SB 582 for its leadership in addressing the environmental nightmare we have created with excessive packaging, especially plastic, that has wrongly been green-washed by industry. When you learn that packaging accounts for the vast majority of primary plastic production, that it makes up 20-30% of our waste, and that an estimated 8 million tons of plastic is thrown into our oceans annually, it can make a citizen angry and frustrated that officials aren't doing more to protect us and the environment.

We have learned from the past that industry cannot be trusted to come up with effective solutions. So much of what has stymied progress with recycling and resource conservation is the result of the misleading and confusing labeling that industry volunteered as a solution decades ago.

But it is not enough to "tinker around the margins" and believe only fixing the labeling issue or singling out plastic alone will be a meaningful solution. We must use this opportunity to take a comprehensive and innovative full-system approach, not just patch-up parts of an outdated system that needs transformation.

It's to be expected that industry will oppose any proposal that requires them to be a fully contributing partner in solutions. But this is where citizens expect our legislators to stand up and do the right thing. It is time to invest in a system that involves all participants in a meaningful way and doesn't just continue to push off the responsibility and costs onto citizens and taxpayers.

I try to do everything I can to personally mitigate my environmental impact, I bring reusable bags to shop, I try to select items with minimal packaging, and when I have the option, decline plastic. The problem is, citizens have very little power and it's very difficult when the options are so limited because industry and retailers profit so much from excessive (often plastic) packaging.

Please vote to approve this bill so that Oregonians will not have to feel so helpless and frustrated about not being able to do much about the impact of excessive packaging.