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Chair Beyer and members of the Senate Energy and Environment Committee:

For the record, my name is Travis Williams. I am Executive Director of the non-profit organization Willamette Riverkeeper.

Since 1996, Willamette Riverkeeper has proudly served as the eyes, ears and voice of the Willamette River. We believe in a river with excellent water quality, abundant habitat, safe for fishing and recreation as a basic public right. One of Willamette Riverkeeper's key public engagement programs up and down the river is "Trashy Tuesday" and "Trashy Thursday", a monthly cleanup event with hundreds of volunteers each year coming out to help clean up our river.

Today, I am submitting testimony In Support of SB 14, an important bill which establishes a product stewardship program for single use plastic service ware. I thank Senator Beyer for bringing this important bill forward to the Committee.

When we think of the global problem of unrecycled single use plastics, we think of the massive plastic patch in the pacific ocean, but in the Willamette River our volunteers clean up countless volumes of plastic trash each year. There are many long term, damaging, and far-reaching health and ecological effects of these misplaced plastics, including ingestion by birds and fish, and absorption of plastic chemicals by wildlife and humans alike. Our use of plastics needs to be reduced. Recovering and replacing single use plastics with service ware which can be reused and eventually recycled at the end of their useful life is one key step in the right direction.

I am testifying today that the problem of single use plastic service ware is a local problem, contributing to the tons of waste materials that Willamette Riverkeeper removes from our river each year. Attached to my testimony are pictures of single use plastic service ware, plastic beverage bottles and other plastic consumer products that our volunteers have pulled from the Willamette as part of our ongoing cleanup and restoration efforts. The amount of plastic we pull from the river is

and restoration efforts. The amount of plastic we pull from the river is shocking, and avoidable. Senate Bill 14 is a good start.

SB 14 is an important step forward in controlling single use plastics through plastic stewardship programs, administered by the Oregon DEQ, which comply with an approved stewardship plan and contributes a fair share to efforts to recycle plastics and internalize the true life cycle costs. The fees collected in this program will go to organize and sustain the plastic stewardship program for Oregon. We must reduce our use of disposable plastics. Producers must step up to pay the true costs of the recycling of these materials, so they are not strewn through our land and waters, for someone else to pick up, or be broken into micro plastics and ingested into all the living creatures, including ourselves.

Just as the Oregon bottle bill helped clean up Oregon by creating incentive to recycle beverage cans, so will our generation of Oregonians address the problem of single use plastics, by creating a system of stewardship organizations to address the problems and provide incentives for Oregonians to use service ware which is reusable, recyclable and does not contribute to the stream of plastic waste which is found in ever greater amounts in the Willamette River, our oceans, landfills and littering our Oregon landscape.

I urge the Committee to give SB 14 a DO PASS recommendation.

Thank You!

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Attached: Pictures of plastic service ware and other waste removed from the Willamette River.



Willamette River clean-up: a sample of single use plastics found



Willamette River clean-up: more single use plastics