



To: House Committee on Rules

From: Julia DeGraw, Oregon Conservation Network, and Oregon League of Conservation Voters

Date: 2/21/2022

RE: Support for HB 4158 to provide an important short-term fix to Oregon E-Cycles program.

Dear Chair Smith Warner, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson, Fahey, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on HB 4148. On behalf of our thousands of members and supporters in Oregon, we would like to register the Oregon Conservation Network's strong support to pass HB 4148 to provide much needed short term fixes to Oregon's E-Cycling program.

The Oregon Conservation Network (OCN) is coordinated through the Oregon League of Conservation Voters (OLCV). OCN is a coalition of 38 not-for-profit organizations throughout the state, united to advocate for pro-conservation legislation and to fight policies that threaten our state's natural legacy. OCN is powered by tens of thousands of Oregonians who belong to their membership organizations. We work to promote policies that will ensure a better Oregon for our children – and to fight policies that do not.

Oregon E-cycles has been operating successfully for more than 10 years, but needs to be updated to address an urgent situation in Oregon. HB 4158 will provide an important short-term fix to allow DEQ to change the goal, retain the existing collection sites, and keep potentially harmful products from ending up in places they should not be. Please pass HB 4158 this session to address this urgent situation.

Essentially, the E-cycling program has been more successful and initially anticipated, which has created the current situation. The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has under-estimated the goal for the volume of e-waste to be collected for 2022. In order to lower the volume of e-waste that gets collected for recycling, in late November 2021, the DEQ-contracted recycler notified a handful of mostly rural existing waste and recycling sites in Oregon that they would no longer be allowed to participate in the E-Cycles program. The change will be effective March 1, 2022.

Dropping the current collection sites will not change the customer demand and volume of materials needing to be recycled—an estimated 1 million pounds of electronic waste will be displaced. The decision to drop current collection sites is highly disruptive to Oregon's recycling system and requires immediate resolution. This destabilizes what has been a safe and environmentally sound way to manage, store, transport, and dispose of these materials that are considered hazardous.

The cost of this program has already been paid for as part of the consumer's purchase of the electronics. If this is not resolved in the 2022 session, dropping existing collection sites will result in:

- confusion for customers in understanding where to take electronic waste;
- less convenient or accessible options that could present health and safety issues if customers instead choose to mix these materials with garbage, or worse, illegally dump the materials;

- negatively impacting the ability of the remaining smaller collection sites to properly and safely handle increased volumes of material; and
- disproportionately impact rural communities in Oregon.

We support House Bill HB 4158 because it is a clear and simple short-term technical legislative fix in 2022 to allow DEQ to change the goal and retain the existing collection sites.

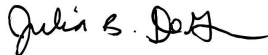
Collection sites across the state provide convenient, safe, and efficient locations for customers to access the Oregon E-Cycles program. Annually, DEQ sets the goal for how much Oregon E-Cycles material is estimated to be collected. That goal sets the reimbursement levels for electronics collection and recycling contractors for the following year.

The decision to drop current collection sites is disruptive to Oregon's recycling system. Many of these sites are located in more rural or coastal areas. If this is not resolved in the 2022 session, the dropping of collection sites will result in disproportionate impacts to rural communities in Oregon. It will also cause customer confusion as the cost of the program has already been paid for and they assume they can responsibly recycle products at the traditional sites.

A short-term solution is critical in 2022 with the commitment that all stakeholders work together to develop a long-term solution for the 2023 Legislative Session to provide consistent and appropriate funding of the E-Cycles program to avoid future disruptions

In conclusion, we urge you to support HB 4158.

Sincerely,



Julia B. DeGraw
Coalition Director
Oregon Conservation Network, and Oregon League of Conservation Voters

Testimony Submitted On behalf of all the OCN Member Organizations:

1000 Friends of Oregon, Association of Oregon Recyclers, Audubon Society of Portland, Beyond Toxics, Cascadia Wildlands, Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Food Safety, Central Oregon LandWatch, Climate Solutions, Defenders of Wildlife, Engineers for a Sustainable Future, The Environmental Center, Environment Oregon, Friends of Mount Hood, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Greater Hells Canyon Council, League of Women Voters of Oregon, Native Fish Society, Neighbors for Clean Air, Oceana, Oregon Coast Alliance, Oregon Environmental Council, Oregon Land and Water Alliance, Oregon League of Conservation Voters, Oregon Natural Desert Association, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition, Oregon Wild, Pew Charitable Trusts, Renewable Northwest, Rogue Riverkeeper, Sierra Club Oregon Chapter, The Street Trust, Surfrider Foundation, Trout Unlimited, Tualatin Riverkeepers, WaterWatch of Oregon, Wild Salmon Center