



Good afternoon Chair Smith-Warner, Vice Chair Breese-Iverson, Vice-Chair Fahey, and Members of the Committee.

I am Rob Thompson, President and owner of Thompson's Sanitary Services. I'm also testifying today as the President of the Board for the Oregon Refuse and Recycling Association.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 4158. I'd also like to thank Representative Marsh, Representative Gomberg, Senator Anderson, and Senator Golden for their leadership and support to bring this urgent issue forward for your consideration.

The Oregon Refuse and Refuse and Recycling Association, ORRA, is the statewide trade association representing solid waste management companies across Oregon. ORRA members collect, transport, and process most of Oregon's residential and commercial refuse and recyclables, as well as operate material recovery facilities and many of Oregon's municipal solid waste transfer stations, landfills, and compost facilities—from small family-owned companies like mine, to the largest waste management company in the world.

My company, Thompson's Sanitary Services, has been a family-owned 4th generation business for just under 60 years. We provide residential and commercial service in the city of Newport and immediate surrounding county residents. We also operate a transfer station that has a DEQ issued solid waste permit with annual inspections for compliance to that permit. Last year we collected about 50,000 pounds of e-waste.

Dahl Disposal Inc., another garbage and recycling company located just south of us on the Oregon Coast has two locations in Lincoln County-Toledo and Waldport-being dropped from the E-Cycles Program. They currently collect around 80,000 pounds of electronic waste a year. Another site, a transfer station in Tillamook Co. being dropped from the program collects around 100,000 pounds a year.

In addition to the coastal collection sites that are being dropped from the program, Rogue Transfer and Recycling in Southern Oregon handles approximately 600,000 pounds of materials a year, and Far West Recycling in the Portland metro area handles nearly 300,000 pounds a year of electronic waste. Many, if not all of the collection sites being dropped have been an important partner since the inception of the E-Cycles program over a decade ago.

Even bigger service providers like Republic Services and Recology won't be able absorb these large increases in material. Collectively, between all of the sites, an estimated 1,000,000 million pounds of electronic waste will be displaced if the current collection sites are dropped from the E-Cycles Program.

To give you a visual, that's over 80 semi-truck loads of discarded e-waste—things, like TVs, computers, and monitors that cannot easily be absorbed by remaining collection sites, and businesses like mine who will be impacted with the over-flow of material—picture a semi-truck load a week of e-waste that will be orphaned.

The collection sites that are being dropped from the program just learned of this late last year when they were given 30 days notice that the program would be ending on December 31. Immediately, these collection sites and ORRA began meeting with DEQ, the National Center for Electronics Recycling (NCER), and MRM (Electronic Manufacturers Recycling Management Company), the other manufacturer organization DEQ oversees to run the E-Cycles Program. Although an extension was granted to March 1, we've been told that DEQ could not find a solution without HB 4158.

Our biggest concerns are that customers have already paid to recycle these items when they purchased the product and safety. Many of these items are required to be recycled- electronic waste is considered hazardous and is banned from going into landfills. The collection sites being dropped from the program are sites that operate under a solid waste permit or license, and are designed to safely receive, store, and ship this type of material in higher volumes.

If the current collection sites are dropped, there is a significant health and safety risk if customers do not have convenient and accessible locations to recycle these products. Instead of recycling the products, it is possible that customers will instead choose to mix these materials with garbage, or worse, illegally dump the waste. At a minimum, it will cause unnecessary frustration, inconvenience, and disruption to many Oregonians, mostly in more rural or distant locations.

Dropping the existing collection sites does not change the customer demand and volume of materials that needs to be recycled. If the current collection sites are not reinstated, that 1 million pounds of electronic waste needs to go somewhere—there is not the capacity or manpower for smaller sites within the program, local solid waste companies like mine, the only sanitary service with e-waste intake for the southern two-thirds of Lincoln County, to absorb these materials.

Speaking for my facility, it is regularly full, and we can only take what we have space for. We can't store this stuff outside in the rain. This is going to be a huge change. And we know human nature. If you take away collection sites that have been in place for 10 years and now tell citizens what it's going to take for them to get rid of their e-waste, it's easy to see what could happen. Like most counties, we have a real problem with illegal dumping—this stuff could go in a ditch, it could go into the brush or on forest land, or it could go into the regular garbage where it could

potentially light our trucks on fire. This year alone we have had a transfer station fire and a collection truck fire.

We need to focus on the citizens—HB 4158 provides a needed short-term solution—there is a customer demand to recycle electronic waste that will not be met unless we keep existing collection sites and recycling infrastructure in place. Dropping these collection sites undermines the credibility and stability of Oregon’s E-Cycles Program.

Participating collection sites are not making money off of this program—these sites work closely with cities and counties to provide this public service to support Oregon’s recycling system, and to offer convenient drop off options to citizens—once we lose these citizens, it’s not easy to get them back.

I’ve included in my written testimony a list of over 30 impacted cities, counties, and other organizations who, along with some of the legislators and others you have heard testimony from today, requested HB 4158 be introduced this session because of the urgent need to fix this problem and restore the dropped Oregon’s E-Cycles Program collection sites for the remainder of 2022 until a long-term solution can be reached:

Association of Oregon Recyclers
City of Central Point
City of Grants Pass Public Works Director Jason Canady
City of Jacksonville
City of Medford
City of Phoenix
City of Siletz
City of Talent City Manager Jordan Rooklyn
City of Talent Zero Waste Team
City of Toledo
City of Waldport
City of Yachats Mayor Leslie Vaaler
Dahl & Dahl, Inc.
Far West Recycling
Jackson County
Josephine County-City of Grants Pass Solid Waste Agency
Lincoln County
Lincoln County Solid Waste District
North Lincoln Sanitary Service
Oregon Refuse and Recycling Association
Recology – Ashland
Recology – Northern Coast
Recology – Western Oregon
Republic Services

Rogue Disposal and Recycling
Rogue Transfer and Recycling
Southern Oregon Climate Action Now
Southern Oregon Master Recyclers in Action
Southern Oregon Sanitation
Thompson's Sanitary Service
Tillamook County

While we recognize that Oregon's E-Cycles Program needs to be reviewed for long-term fixes to bring back for the 2023 session, the solutions are complex and there is not time to do this in the short session.

HB 4158 provides a short-term technical fix that is urgently needed to sustain the E-Cycles Program for the remainder of 2022.

I urge your support for HB 4158. I appreciate your time and consideration and am happy to answer any questions you may have.