

To Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

February 11, 2023

Statement In support of SB 543: Prohibits food vendor from using polystyrene foam container in sales of prepared food

From Karin Radtke, resident in Lane County north of Florence.

On November 20, 2017, the City of Florence passed an Ordinance banning the use of polystyrene foam food and beverage containers.

Ordinance No 12, Series 2017, was passed unanimously by the five Florence City Council members. The purpose of the ordinance was “To provide for the health and welfare of the citizens of Florence and preserve the scenic quality and natural environment of the City and its surrounding area.”

Several months later, on July 25, 2018, The Siuslaw News published a guest opinion by Maureen Miltenberger who was then Chair of the City’s Environmental Management Advisory Committee (EMAC), and EMAC member Britte Kirsch. The article is a positive statement thanking the community and commenting on the transition by businesses and individuals to comply with the ordinance.

[Siuslaw News | EMAC's continued commitment to local environment \(thesiuslawnews.com\)](https://www.siuslawnews.com/emacs-continued-commitment-to-local-environment)

I can say that I have seen firsthand the beneficial result of this ban on polystyrene foam containers, especially along the sides of Highway 126 that leads west out of Florence from Highway 101 and alongside the Siuslaw River. For the past 20 years I have participated in the Adopt-a-Hwy Program of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). I am a volunteer with the group that has a permit with ODOT to regularly remove trash at the sides of the first two miles (mileposts 0-2) of Highway 126.

Thanks to the Florence ban on polystyrene foam food containers, our group has noticed a steep decline in these items during trash pickups beginning in 2018.

Prior to that time, many polystyrene items were picked up during each trash pickup, including small pieces and fragments that do not decompose. If not picked up and disposed of in a landfill, these items get washed by rain or blown by the wind into the Siuslaw River to the Pacific Ocean and onto our beaches. Today it is rare to find a polystyrene foam item at the side of the road leading west out of Florence.

I believe that regulation at the State level is an effective way to reduce certain types of trash that do not decompose quickly and are harmful to wildlife or unsightly. The Oregon Bottle Bill and the statewide ban on single use plastic grocery bags are good examples.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 543.

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Coordinator for Florence Area Democrats
ODOT Adopt-a-Hwy Permit No. 05M40885