

Submitter: Ian Proctor

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure: SB543

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley and members of the committee, for the record my name is Ian Proctor and I am a sophomore at University of Oregon, I study Journalism, Environmental studies, and film. I'm the Journalism senator in our student government, the Associated Students of the University of Oregon, or ASUO.

So I'm a film buff, and if you'll remember from *The Graduate*, the quote: "Plastics, Ben. There's a great future in plastics." This "great future" was only in a financial sense, because hardly anyone today could call the future created by mass plastic production "great". Of course, the *Graduate* took place in the 60s. Back then, toys were made of tin, aluminum and wood. Today, they're all made with plastics. Many of you also grew up in a world where clothes were made of cotton. I grew up in a world where they were made of plastics. My generation and my parents' generation were born into this plastics hegemony, and we have become accustomed to our world revolving around plastics. But we don't like it. We all know how harmful plastics are, just like fossil fuels. Yet, we were raised to believe that having our world flooded with plastics is normal. But it isn't, and it wasn't always this way. And yet, we've internalized their presence in our world. It's basically "learned helplessness", as they'd teach in Psych 101. We don't like plastics, but we as people believe we have no ability to get rid of them.

As I've learned, however, we aren't helpless, as the city of Eugene took a small step towards breaking free from plastics, by passing a similar ban to SB 543, which banned polystyrene plastic food containers in Eugene. We need to keep the momentum going on this. In the ASUO student government, we passed a resolution supporting Eugene's 2019 polystyrene ban. Right now, we're hard at work getting student organizations, professors, and outside organizations to co-sponsor a new resolution that supports SB 543, OSPIRG students' Beyond Plastics campaign, and most importantly condemns the sale of single-use polystyrene plastics as reckless, irresponsible, and immoral.

SB 543 will ban food vendors from using polystyrene containers and packaging. However, I want to use my voice here to say that we can go farther than only this bill. I personally wish to see the valve of plastic production to finally be shut off. I've had to grow up knowing, since the age of about five, that I would live to witness environmental disaster through climate change and mass plastic pollution. SB 543, while effective, should only be treated as a stepping stone as part of phasing-out polystyrene, and eventually most plastics. I believe that more can be done than just SB 543, but SB 543 is an excellent starting point, and its effects will help reduce the

impact created by polystyrene plastics.

The Oregon state legislature should make an example to the public and to young people not only in Oregon, but all across the country. To young people who have increasingly become disillusioned with government and have fallen into the hole of acceptance and learned helplessness. Oregon can help lead the way in reducing our reliance on plastics, even through a small step like this one.