

Submitter: Kirsten Lee  
On Behalf Of: Community for Earth First Unitarian Portland  
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment  
Measure: SB545

In lieu of virtual testimony as I was not able to connect during the hearing on 2/14/23.

Thank you Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Findlay and Committee members Golden, Hayden, and Leiber for this opportunity to testify and for your thoughtful leadership.

My name is Kirsten Lee. Today I am offering testimony for SB 545 the Legalizing Reusables bill and support for the entire package of Plastic Reduction bills.

I am here on behalf of the Community for Earth of First Unitarian Portland and following these bills on behalf of the Climate Energy and Environment of the Consolidate Oregon Indivisible Network (CEE of COIN).

I grew up in Corvallis as a “co-op kid” accustomed at an early age to bringing clean, empty containers for refilling--everything from beans and nut butters to produce. I made and used homemade denim shopping bags way before most people were used to the whole Bring Your Own Bag idea. My grandmother Ruth was a classic “use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without” child of the depression so I also made my own bulk produce bags from fabric she gave me to add to the ones I have purchased.

For many years pre-pandemic, I had been relying on my clean, reusable cloth bags and containers for bulk items, saving COUNTLESS plastic bags from being consumed. Unbeknownst to me, not only was I asking the checkers at my favorite stores to do me a favor, but also asking them to go against both corporate rules and Oregon’s Health Code! Had I known, I would have spoken up earlier on something that means a great deal to me as I endeavor to make the best choices for the future of our planet.

While I believe it is every individual’s responsibility to take as many actions on the personal and household level as they can towards stemming the Climate Crisis we ALL face, this suite of legislation is an opportunity to show leadership and vision on a much larger scale which we desperately need.

SB 545 gives consumers the access and convenience they need and businesses the opportunity to offer what their customers want-- the freedom from single-use, wasteful plastics and the freedom to choose what they buy, bring home and use. Please make reusables legal every day and for everybody in Oregon.

Thank you.

Kirsten Lee