

Submitter: Helena Birecki

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure: SB545

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-chairs Levy, and Members of the Committee,

I'm a resident of Neskowin, Oregon, and I've worked in food establishments as a hostess and a waitress. I support the original version of this bill which stronger, more immediate provisions to reduce unnecessary pollution and health harms from the production and disposal of single use containers.

Please strengthen the current version of the bill to enable customers to use their own clean containers at a wider range of food establishments.

I am copying my original testimony below:

I wholeheartedly support SB 545. No one should be forced to purchase or use single use containers and generate unnecessary waste. The production of single use containers and bags is energy intensive and polluting, the disposal of single use containers or bags strains local waste management capacity, and tends to pollute our waterways.

I've worked as a hostess and a waitress, and I was just as happy to refill someone's water bottle as I was to refill the glass on their table. Food workers do indeed face health and safety risks, but I can't see any more risk from handling a container a customer brought from home than from handling a container that the customer picked up and handled on the way to the cash register.

When I lived in Michigan and in California, I worked, shopped, and ate in food establishments which allowed customers to use and refill their own containers.

Neither I or anyone I knew experienced health or safety issues with container reuse either on the employee or customer side.

Current Oregon law on this is flawed. Please pass SB 545 to decrease plastic waste and pollution, and allow individuals to re-use their own property. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Helena Birecki