

Tackling food waste: HB 3018

HB 3018 (Rep. Neron) would standardize food labeling practices to reduce consumer confusion, and require large producers of food to responsibly dispose of wasted food using alternative methods like composting to significantly reduce food waste in Oregon.



Saving families money:

An average family of four spends \$1500 annually on uneaten food. Over 70% of discarded food in Oregon could have been eaten. Consumer confusion accounts for at least 10% of this waste. Implementing uniform date labeling could help clarify and reduce this confusion.

Providing meals to Oregonians:

Organic diversion programs in other states have boosted food donations significantly. Vermont experienced a 60% increase in donations after its policy was implemented, while Massachusetts saw a 25,000-ton rise in the following year. Implementing similar programs in Oregon could enhance food donations and provide thousands of meals to Oregonians.

Cutting climate pollution:

Most food waste ends up in landfills where it produces methane, a greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. Removing food waste from landfills could reduce methane emissions by 33% and help mitigate climate pollution.

High quality compost:

Composting food waste prevents the production of methane emissions. Not only that, but the end product of composting is a nutrient rich soil that can be applied as fertilizer, helping farmers, gardeners and landscapers alike.

We waste too much food in Oregon. Almost 1 million tons of food went uneaten in 2022 alone and about one third of that uneaten food ends up in landfills. Given the amount of time, resources and labor it takes to produce our food, the last thing we should do is toss it in the trash, when it could be used to feed Oregonians and enrich our soil.

Tackling food waste: HB 3018

What would HB 3018 do?

Uniform date labeling

Most of us are familiar with the labels that come on our food: “best by”, “use by”, “sell by”. Unsure what different labels mean, consumers often decide to toss a product, rather than risk eating something that’s gone bad. Almost 10% of all wasted food is due to confusion over date labels. The bill would require the terms “best by” and “use by” to communicate quality and safety, respectively. Additionally, grocery stores will no longer be able to sell products with only a “sell by” date.

Commercial organics diversion

More than half of all food waste in Oregon comes from the commercial sector. The bill would require large food generators to separate scraps and excess food into a separate bin to be composted.

Business Obligations:

- Separate food waste from other solid waste
- Correctly label collection containers
- Arrange for food waste collection services provided by municipalities

Phased Implementation:

- Jan. 1, 2027: Entities that produce more than 1000 lbs. of food waste per week.
- Jan. 1, 2028: Entities that produce more than 500 lbs. of food waste per week.
- Entities that produce less than 500 lbs. per week are encouraged to participate voluntarily.

For more information, contact Brenna Stevens: bstevens@ospirg.org, 971-266-2454

