

February 18, 2025

House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 2062 - Support

Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Levy, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of The Environmental Center in Bend, Oregon in support of HB 2062, Providing for the Safe and Responsible Management of Batteries.

For over 30 years, The Environmental Center has worked to embed sustainability into daily life in Central Oregon. Currently, through our program areas of climate solutions, youth education, school gardens, materials and waste, and advocacy. The Environmental Center's Rethink Waste Project conducts education and engagement, and implements innovative solutions throughout Deschutes County to first prevent and reduce waste, then recover as much as possible.

Here's why we enthusiastically support establishing a battery EPR program in Oregon:

Battery disposal is confusing

We get questions all the time from community members about how to recycle or dispose of batteries. We even had to answer it in our [September 2024 newsletter](#)¹ and as [a blog post](#)² a month later. Plus, I mean it when I say: "I'll be honest that I often get confused as well."

Confusion leads to fires

Improper disposal of lithium batteries is a common cause of landfill (and truck) fires. According to [OPB](#), Knott Landfill had 21 battery-related fires in a 3 month time period. This quote from Deschutes County Solid Waste Director, Tim Brownell, puts it in perspective: "It's a public safety concern and it's a concern for the infrastructure that are taxpayer investments."³

¹https://prod.cdn.everyaction.com/emails/van/EA/EA016/1/103253/O4Zn4UBzm6ut-O6Py_PWn7n3f5dWIP14UP6cSvTMwAI_archive

² <https://envirocenter.org/what-we-know-about-battery-recycling/>

³ <https://www.opb.org/article/2023/10/21/exploding-lithium-batteries-landfill-fires/>





Even more dangerously, a Southern Oregon Sanitary recycling truck [caught on fire last August](#).⁴ These fires are preventable – with a standardized collection and recycling process, that folks across the state don't have to research and learn, but that is clear and obvious to everyone.

Making producers responsible makes sense

Oregon made the paint stewardship program permanent in 2013.⁵ [PaintCare](#) is an example of a successful program, pioneered in Oregon, now in 10 states. Let's do the same with batteries.

Significant environmental benefits

Vermont increased its collection of batteries by more than 180% in its first year of implementation.⁶ In addition to the increase in collections and recycling, EPR encourages responsible manufacturing *by keeping the end-of-life stage in mind from the start*.

We urge you to support HB 2062 for increased clarity, safety, and environmental responsibility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kavi Chokshi".

Kavi Chokshi (he/him)
Rethink Waste Program Manager
The Environmental Center

⁴ <https://www.sosanitation.com/lithium-ion-battery-truck-fire-august-21st-2024/>

⁵ <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/mm/Pages/Paint.aspx>

⁶ <https://productstewardship.us/products/batteries/>

