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| Submitter:                     | Asher McKinnon                                      |
| On Behalf Of:                  | OSPIRG Students                                     |
| Committee:                     | House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment |
| Measure, Appointment or Topic: | SB551   |

Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Gamba, Levy, and members of the Committee, my name is Asher McKinnon and I am a senior at the University of Oregon, studying political science and global studies. I am an intern with OSPIRG students and the grassroots coordinator for our Better Bag Ban campaign.

Growing up in Eugene, I've always had a deep appreciation for the beautiful natural spaces of our state, and as I've gotten older I've realized how privileged we are to enjoy them. I've been lucky to experience places like Crater Lake, the Willamette River, and the beaches of Florence my entire life. Unfortunately, even our most pristine habitats are being impacted by plastic pollution. I've seen pollution clogging our waterways, littering our forests, and tarnishing Oregon's legacy as a leader on environmental protection. Despite the obstacles, our community has inspired me to continue working for progress.

Coordinating our grassroots efforts to build support to tackle plastic pollution in Oregon, I've seen the widespread sentiment against wasteful plastics. Our volunteers understand the pervasiveness of pollution and the direct, straightforward steps we can take to prevent it. The basis of our work here is to support the public and their interest for a sustainable future, which begins with our grassroots organizing. To that point, the overwhelming majority of the students and community members we speak to strongly support Senate Bill 551 as a direct measure to protect our planet.

The students at the University of Oregon agree that nothing we use for a moment should go on to harm our health and our environment for generations to come, but oftentimes those concerns are taken for granted or dismissed for the sake of "convenience". I've had many students tell me of times they were handed a bag despite their insistence that they didn't need it, and that it ultimately went to waste even with their best efforts to reuse it. We even get thick plastic bags given to us when we buy our textbooks at the campus bookstore. The plastic issue is often deflected onto the individual consumer, but this shouldn't be the case. Oregonians need reassurance that their representatives have done all they can to protect our natural spaces. Some I speak to point to the Sustainable Shoppers Initiative of 2019 and feel discouraged by the evidence of plastic pollution still apparent around them. However, they're always excited to know we can do more. Representatives, it's more essential than ever to move Oregon beyond plastics.