



April 17, 2025

RE: SUPPORT for Senate Bill 551

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

On behalf of our organizations and our supporters throughout Oregon, we express our strong support of "Beyond the Bag Ban" (Senate Bill 551), as a critical opportunity for Oregon to reduce plastics at the source and continue to take steps to stem the tide of plastic pollution.

Our addiction to plastic is a ballooning problem, responsible for growing landfills and over a garbage truck of plastic pollution entering our ocean every minute. This pollution is damaging our ecosystems and endangering public health. Plastics are also bad for our climate. Between manufacturing, use, and disposal, in 2020, the U.S. plastics industry was responsible for climate pollution equivalent to 116 average-sized coal-fired power plants. Ultimately, we need to stop producing and using so much plastic, or the problem is going to get exponentially worse.

In recent years, Oregon has become a national leader in addressing plastic pollution, but there's still more work to be done. Senate Bill 551 would reduce plastic in three ways. First, the bill will eliminate all plastic film bags at checkout at grocery stores and restaurants starting on January 1, 2027. Second, the bill will phase out single-use plastic toiletries at lodging establishments with more than 50 rooms starting on January 1, 2027 for all lodging establishments starting on January 1, 2028. Finally, the bill will add utensils and condiments to our existing "straws upon request" law starting on July 1, 2026.

The bill prioritizes reducing the use and waste of items that are intended for one use, are not accepted in curbside recycling and are destined to be trash after just moments of use including thick plastic film bags, small single-use plastic toiletries, utensils, and condiments. These single-use items are among the most common items found as litter at beach and waterway cleanups in Oregon.

To protect public health and the environment, conserve natural resources and landscapes, and reduce unnecessary waste, please pass Senate Bill 551.

Sincerely,

Tom Egleston
Legislative Chair
Association of Oregon Recyclers

Lisa Arkin
Executive Director
Beyond Toxics

Joe Liebezeit
Director of Statewide Conservation
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