



April 16, 2025

Representative John Lively
Chair, House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment

Re: SB 551 Beyond the Bag Ban (Support)

Chair Lively and Honorable Members of the House

On behalf of Oregon chapter network, our greater membership and thousands of Oregon supporters and volunteers, the Surfrider Foundation would like to express our strong support for SB 551 - a bill to help curb our consumption and waste of single use plastics. We know very well the negative impacts of single use plastics in our environment, waterways and oceans. SB 551 addresses some simple behavior changes across retail, restaurants and the lodging industry where some of the most ubiquitous and wasteful consumerism of single-use plastics occurs. At the business level within the restaurant and lodging industry, we know these “ask first” and reuse policies only stand to save businesses both money and cut waste¹. Working beyond the bag ban through policies that help evolve our, often unnecessary, consumer behaviors is an easy and cost-effective opportunity to reduce single use plastics in Oregon.

Surfrider Foundation is a grassroots, non-profit environmental organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our world's ocean, waves and beaches. Our Oregon chapter network comprises thousands of supporters and volunteers throughout the state organized among our 5 distinct coastal chapters in Oregon. Our plastic pollution initiative includes extensive ongoing coastal beach cleanups, local policy advocacy, partnerships with researchers and business-forward programs to reduce plastic waste such as our Ocean Friendly Restaurant and Lodging Programs. It is through these efforts our volunteers and Oregon network of chapters and members are working in your local communities in Oregon on single use plastic pollution from the cleanup level to the consumer and business prevention level. We have learned through this deep community organizing and programmatic work with the restaurant and lodging industry that these efforts make good business sense, are what consumers want and stand to save these industries money.

As coastal residents, we live adjacent to one of our state's most valuable economic and ecological resources, the beach and ocean. We live on this rural edge and witness the degradation of our marine life and beaches and experience this problem much differently than those in inland communities. This time of year we call “plastic debris season” due to the massive volumes of single-use plastics and foam that washes ashore with large storms

¹ [Reuse Wins, Gordon, Miriam, et. al, 2021](#): life-cycle studies and Upstream report comparing the environmental impacts of disposables versus reusables, the economic data available on savings to businesses, and projected growth opportunities for the sector for investors and entrepreneurs

and tide events. It requires what we call “rapid response cleanups” where volunteers mobilize overnight to tackle large swaths of beach areas that are completely inundated with plastic. Can you imagine having a debris season wash over your child’s ball field, your local park or school playground so thick you couldn’t see the ground beneath your feet? For coastal residents, this is the plastic reality of our beach winter season. Attached is a photo to give you a better idea of what we’re talking about from Otter Rock Marine Reserve at Devil’s Punchbowl State Park last winter – even these special parks and protected areas are not immune to downstream effects of plastic pollution. A closer inspection of these plastics along the tidal wrack lines at the beach reveals that many are in fact single-use plastic items from local take-out and retail, often used for only minutes following the purchase but enduring for lifetimes in the environment. Attached are a few more photos to demonstrate the problem we see and are responding to on our beaches.

As more and more of our policy interests faces the production end of plastics, we continue to chip away at consumer and business opportunities that make good sense. SB 551 is one of those policies that takes some simple direction at the business level that is a win-win for businesses and the environment. We encourage your yes on SB 551.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charlie Plybon". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first and last names being clearly legible.

Charlie Plybon
Oregon Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation
cplybon@surfrider.org
541-961-8143



Devil's Punch Bowl State Park - heavy plastic debris from seasonal events. Winter storms bring debris downstream and westerly winds blow large masses of plastic debris along beaches. Beaches adjacent headlands and river mouths are most heavily impacted by these large debris events.



Nye Beach, Newport: And this is what it looks like when our volunteers try and clean up following these massive debris events. Surfrider volunteers employing painstaking sifting and screening strategies to separate small broken down plastic pieces from the sand during cleanup events.



Oswald West State Park: Even our most iconic state parks are not immune to these plastic pollution events. Our North Coast and Portland Chapter organize “Oswald West Action Days” seasonally to respond to beach stewardship needs



Lost Creek State Park 1: A typical wrack line (tidal line of debris) for an Oregon open beach in winter and early spring. In these photos you can easily distinguish both single use food products from close to home to pre-production plastic “nurdles”. These photographs were all shot on the same day along a short stretch in front of the park.



Lost Creek State Park 2: A typical wrack line (tidal line of debris) for an Oregon open beach in winter and early spring. In these photos you can easily distinguish both single use food products from close to home to pre-production plastic “nurdles”. These photographs were all shot on the same day along a short stretch in front of the park.



Lost Creek State Park 3: A typical wrack line (tidal line of debris) for an Oregon open beach in winter and early spring. In these photos you can easily distinguish both single use food products from close to home to pre-production plastic “nurdles”. These photographs were all shot on the same day along a short stretch in front of the park.



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