



April 16, 2025

**RE: Support for Senate Bill 551 – Relating to plastic waste: plastic checkout bags, single-use plastics and condiments, single-use plastic health or beauty products**

Dear Committee Members,

Ocean Conservancy is working to protect the ocean from today's greatest global challenges. Together with our partners, we create evidence-based solutions for a healthy ocean and the wildlife and communities that depend on it. For 40 years, we have been on the forefront of tackling one of the ocean's biggest threats, plastic pollution, through organizing the largest cleanup effort in the world and successfully advocating for state, national and international policies to prevent plastics from becoming pollution in the first place.

We are writing to express our strong support for SB 551, which will help tackle the plastic pollution crisis through three concrete actions to address single-use plastics.

Every year, 11 million metric tons of plastics enter our ocean from land-based sources alone, much of which are single-use plastics, designed to be used once and then immediately discarded. While the ocean is the epicenter of the plastic pollution crisis, the impacts of plastic production, use, and pollution are extensive. Plastics have been found in the deepest part of the ocean, on the tallest peaks in our national parks, and in our own bodies. In the nearly 40 years Ocean Conservancy has led the International Coastal Cleanup® (ICC), nearly 120,000 volunteers have removed over 1.4 million pounds of debris in Oregon.

Plastic grocery bags are the fifth most commonly collected items along Oregon's beaches, waterways, parks, and natural spaces. Six out of the top ten items most commonly collected around Oregon are single-use plastics, precisely what SB 551 is designed to address.

To tackle our plastic pollution and climate crises head on, we need to require a reduction in single-use plastics. The bill prioritizes reducing the use and waste of items that are single-use, are not accepted in curbside recycling, and are highly polluting in our ocean including thick plastic film checkout bags, small single-use plastic toiletries, utensils, and condiments. First, the bill will eliminate all plastic film bags at checkout at grocery stores and restaurants starting January 1, 2027, following similar laws passed recently in Colorado and California to phase-out plastic grocery bags once and for all. Second, the bill will phase out single-use plastic toiletries at lodging establishments with more than 50 rooms starting January 1, 2027, continuing to all lodging establishments starting January 1, 2028, consistent with actions major hotel chains are already taking to reduce their reliance on single-use plastics. Finally, the bill will add utensils and condiments to our existing "straws upon request" law starting July 1, 2026.

Oregon has been a leader on addressing the plastic pollution crisis, from passing the nation's first bottle bill to the passage of the Recycling Modernization Act in 2021, one of the first extended producer responsibility policies for packaging in the country. However, the science is clear – to address our plastic pollution crisis we must do more, and that starts with reducing the amount of unnecessary single-use plastics we make and use.

For the sake of our communities, our ocean, and our climate, we must take immediate action to address plastic pollution. That is why we strongly urge your support of SB 551.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anja Brandon', with a stylized, flowing script.

Anja Brandon, Ph.D.  
Director, Plastics Policy  
Ocean Conservancy