



TO: House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
RE: Support for SB 551
FROM: Brenna Stevens, Campaign Associate, OSPIRG, bstevens@ospirg.org

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

For the record, my name is Brenna Stevens and I am a campaign associate with OSPIRG. OSPIRG is a statewide, member-based organization representing thousands of Oregonians across the state. We speak out for the public and stand up to special interests on problems that affect the public's health, safety and wellbeing. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 551 to help eliminate unnecessary plastic waste.

We've known for a long time that single-use plastics are wasteful, and bad for our environment and our health, which is why the Oregon legislature made the decision to pass the "sustainable shopping initiative" and other bills to reduce plastic pollution in recent years. But our work isn't over. There are still too many single-use plastics in our lives that we don't need— whether it's the small plastic toiletries at the hotel that we don't use, the spoon, fork or ketchup packets that get automatically thrown in the takeout bag only to be put into a junk drawer because we feel too guilty throwing them away, or the plastic grocery bag, filled with other plastic grocery bags stashed away somewhere in your home. What are we saving these all for?

These plastics, while they may seem minor, really add up. I spent last summer running our grassroots canvass office, where we talked to over 20,000 Oregonians across the state about the issues that we work on, including plastic pollution, and I can tell you that this is something that people care deeply about. Beyond adding unnecessary clutter to our lives, plastics pollute our communities and the environment, and threaten our health. They last for hundreds of years, and can slowly leach toxic chemicals into the water and soil when it ends up in our environment and in landfills - which most of it does. Nationally, less than 10% of plastic actually ends up being recycled. It takes centuries to degrade, and even then, it never really goes away, but instead breaks down into microplastics which have been found at the top of the highest Alps, in the deepest parts of our oceans, and in our own bodies.

We can live without these single-use plastics. In fact, we should. Nothing we use for one shopping trip or one meal or one shower should pile up in landfills, litter our streets, clutter our cabinets, and pollute our landfills for generations to come. Especially when it is just unnecessary "stuff."

I urge your support of SB 551 and thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Brenna Stevens
OSPIRG