

To: Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Smith and Members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment

From: Jennifer Eisele, Communities and Ecosystems Project Manager, Beyond Toxics

Date: April 16, 2025

Subject: Testimony in support of SB 515

Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Smith, and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment,

I am writing today in strong support of SB 551, a crucial step toward reducing plastic waste and protecting Oregon's environment. Plastic pollution is a growing crisis, filling our waterways, harming wildlife, and contributing to long-term environmental degradation.

Every year, countless single-use plastic items—checkout bags, utensils, condiment packets, and small toiletry bottles—end up in landfills or, worse, in waterways.

Micro-particles from degraded plastics can even impact our bodies, putting the health of Oregonians and future generations at risk of disease and poor health outcomes.

Children are uniquely vulnerable to environmental health hazards due to their rapid development, immature defense systems, and longer future lifespan, making them more susceptible to the effects of environmental exposures. This increased vulnerability, combined with potential for increased exposure per body weight and longer-term health consequences, necessitates specific efforts to protect their health. In recent years there have been a number of studies on the occurrence of microplastics (MP)s and their effects on human health . The presence of MP in different human biological systems has been reported in a growing number of studies. For example, MPs have been found in 15 human biological systems, including the blood, liver, lungs, placenta, kidneys, and spleen¹. Another recent study documents high concentrations of MPs and nano micro plastic particles (NMPs) and the highest concentrations were found in (decedent) brains of Alzheimer patients² Another study found MPs in placenta;s of unborn babies.³

¹ Chia RW, Atem NV, Lee JY, Cha J. Microplastic and human health with focus on pediatric well-being: a comprehensive review and call for future studies. *Clin Exp Pediatr*. 2025 Jan;68(1):1-15. doi: 10.3345/cep.2023.01739. Epub 2024 Nov 6. PMID: 39533740; PMCID: PMC11725616.

² Nihart, A.J., Garcia, M.A., El Hayek, E. *et al*. Bioaccumulation of microplastics in decedent human brains. *Nat Med* 31, 1114–1119 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-024-03453-1>

³ Plasticenta: First evidence of microplastics in human placenta, *Environment International*, Vol 146, 2021, 106274, ISSN 0160-4120, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envint.2020.106274>.

These are just a handful of studies indicating exposure to microplastics from prior to birth through end of life via numerous exposure pathways. We must act now to take incremental steps towards a plastics phase out.

SB 551 will not ban all plastic products but instead shifts the burden by requiring consumers to request these items when needed, rather than receiving them automatically. This simple change has been proven effective in reducing plastic consumption without disrupting business operations or customer convenience. These are small steps we can take towards changing behaviors to be less reliant on disposable single use convenience items in plastic containers.

Oregon has long been a leader in environmental policy, and SB 551 aligns with our state's commitment to sustainability. By reducing reliance on single-use plastics, we are protecting Oregon for generations to come..

I strongly urge a YES vote on SB 551 and move Oregon forward in the to reduce plastic waste in our landfills