

Chair Gamba, Vice Chair Gamba, Vice Chair Levy, Members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment:

Please pass [SB 551](#) out of committee with a Do Pass recommendation and move it to the House for the YES vote it deserves from all legislators.

Last Saturday was the monthly community clean-up in my hometown of The Dalles. Several of us tackled a very small stretch of land between I-84 and a community park. Others took on other areas. My group spent 2 hours hunched over picking remnants of plastic bags, cups, straws, cutlery, and take-away containers out of grasses and bushes on a steep and rocky hillside. (The worst was the thousands of polystyrene packaging “peanuts!” I wish SB 551 included those!) Next month, we’ll be out there again, and there will undoubtedly be plenty of new plastic waste to pick up in a never-ending battle by volunteers to keep this non-biodegradable garbage out of our waterways and ultimately the ocean, where it does immense damage to aquatic life.

I had the good fortune to spend a few weeks in Australia this past winter. The lack of plastic garbage alongside roadways and walking paths was a striking contrast to Oregon. The reason for this became evident to us quickly: stores did not provide plastic bags, restaurants did not provide plastic straws or cutlery (bamboo or other biodegradable cutlery was offered for take-away meals if requested), hotels did not provide the tiny plastic shampoo and lotion containers. Further, polystyrene packaging peanuts and food and beverage containers are banned in several Australian states, as are a whole host of other problematic plastics. Each state has slightly different bans, but they are all way ahead of us and every state is working to increase the types of plastic that are banned each year.

<https://www.marineconservation.org.au/which-australian-states-are-banning-single-use-plastics/>

Plastics are a plague. Humans managed without single-use plastics for most of our existence and we can do so again. Might it be slightly less convenient for a lazy nation? Sure. But there really is no legitimate excuse not to pass this bill, and then we need to pass another next year and the year after that, until all our problematic plastics will only exist in landfills. Other nations are doing this and we absolutely CAN do it, too. There are thousands of years of history to prove it is possible.

Respectfully,

Debi Ferrer
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