

The Association of Oregon Counties Supports SB 245 and SB 263

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TO: Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee
FROM: Mark Nystrom, AOC Policy Staff

DEQ's legislative proposals, SB 245 and SB263 pertain to materials management and stable funding. Both proposals stem from an intensive convening of the Materials Management Work Group and its three sub-groups met a total of twenty two times in 2014. AOC believes these two bills jointly reflect a general consensus of that Materials Management Work Group about balanced and necessary solutions to strengthen the ever-complex related activities of DEQ and local wastesheds to manage 'best practices' for solid waste and hazardous waste throughout Oregon. Likewise, inaction at this time will likely amplify for local governments the tumultuous and rapidly changing nature of 'materials management', as Counties strive to understand, manage and communicate to our citizens about the prioritization of hazards and resource impacts in our communities and who pays for the optimal solutions.

Benefits to local wastesheds:

- Fewer toxic chemicals in products and wastes (with associated health and environmental benefits) resulting from effective research, incentives, and advocacy through green chemistry and related initiatives.
- Financial, technical and programmatic assistance to improve upon existing local household hazardous waste management services, including services that target high-priority/high-risk waste streams (such as school lab clean-outs and services to divert mercury amalgam wastes from wastewater disposal).
- Maintaining current levels of service for complaint response involving illegal disposal.
- Technical and financial assistance to help businesses reduce the environmental impacts of materials they produce and/or purchase, grow market share for "green" products, and save money. As an example, a DEQ pilot project helped 7 businesses evaluate their use of packaging materials; resulting savings from changes that DEQ recommended saved \$994,000/year net. AOC would like to bring these kinds of benefits to more businesses.
- Financial and programmatic assistance to help social service agencies capture and divert perishable but edible food away from landfill and into the kitchens of low-income families.

- Financial and programmatic assistance for other waste prevention and reuse projects, such as the Habitat for Humanity ReStore model of reusable building material salvage.
- Financial and technical assistance to support, improve, and expand waste recycling and composting programs, as desired by local partners.
- “Shelf-ready” projects designed for possible implementation by cities, counties or other partners. For example, county solid waste managers propose to bring to Oregon the successful “Love Food, Hate Waste” program from the UK that has saved businesses and consumers hundreds of millions of dollars while significantly reducing the wasting of food; not through composting, but prevention and reuse. Other priority work areas include enhanced plastics recycling and improved multi-tenant recycling—both residential and commercial.
- Improvements in the environmental performance of products, for example, less toxic formulations of cleaning products, or lower carbon footprint materials purchased through state government contracts, which are also available for use by local governments.
- Broad public health, climate, resource and other benefits associated with resource conservation and pollution reductions resulting from programs statewide.
- Better and more responsive measurement of outcomes, including improvements to the annual material recovery survey and continuation of waste composition studies with opportunities for local partners to “buy in” to oversampling in their communities to generate community-specific waste composition results, with half of all sampling costs paid by DEQ.
- Statewide capacity building in several areas, including environmental analysis of materials to inform sound decision-making by local governments, consumers and businesses.

AOC would like to commend DEQ in their outreach to counties. DEQ staff responded promptly and efficiently to each county’s concerns. While there are a few counties that are still raising specific concerns about the legislation, AOC and DEQ have committed to work together to find reasonable solutions to these local problems. If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please contact AOC Staff Mark Nystrom.