

**Testimony of Randy Tucker, Legislative Affairs Manager  
In Support of Senate Bills 245 and 263  
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
February 25, 2015**



Chair Edwards and members of the Committee:

Metro is the regional government of the Portland metropolitan area. Among our major responsibilities are managing and reducing the region's solid waste and protecting and overseeing a regional system of parks and natural areas. Metro serves a population of 1.5 million, providing services and educational resources that protect the environment and reduce the toxicity of the solid waste stream.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of SB 263 and SB 245. Metro strongly supports both of these bills. Together they will provide the direction and resources necessary for the Department of Environmental Quality to implement the *2050 Vision and Framework for Action* adopted by the Environmental Quality Commission.

The 2050 Vision document identified a need to update Oregon's statutes relating to recycling opportunities, goals, measures, and funding for DEQ's Materials Management Program. Over the last two years, the DEQ convened and Metro participated in multiple workgroups that addressed those issues and helped to generate these two legislative proposals. During the process, the DEQ listened closely to stakeholders concerns and comments. We believe the resulting proposals are responsive to that input.

Metro supports SB 263's provisions regarding new goals and recycling programs. Among the provisions that we anticipate will influence the plans and programs in our region are:

- Revising and updating regional recovery goals.

The bill proposes a new recovery goal of 64% by 2025 for our region. This rate is approximately 6 percentage points above the rate the region had achieved by 2013. While Metro and local governments will have to work harder to meet the revised recovery goal, we believe it is achievable. Increasing food waste recovery will be key to our ability to meet the goal.

- New statewide waste recovery goals for specific materials: food waste, plastic, and carpet.

Metro participated in the discussions that established these targets. We believe they will help focus state, local and private recycling efforts where there is significant opportunity to improve environmental outcomes. We expect our region to play a significant role in helping the state to achieve these goals.

- Increasing the number of recycling program “elements” required of local governments and replacing the waste prevention credits system with a menu of waste prevention and reuse program elements.

While the proposal would increase the recycling requirements in our region, local governments in our region appear to already be implementing as many programs as would be required. With regard to meeting waste prevention and reuse requirements, additional efforts in the region may be required. Metro is prepared to assist local governments in helping them meet these requirements.

Metro supports the funding proposals in SB 245.

- We strongly believe there is a need for increased funding to support both traditional solid waste management activities and the new materials management activities identified in the 2050 Vision. DEQ’s fees have not been adjusted for inflation for twenty years.
- The proposed fee increases and extensions to a broader set of wastes are reasonable and appropriate. The extensions of fees to additional wastes are phased in or subject to certain conditions. The legislation is forward-looking in calling for a report on funding options by 2022.

Metro commends the DEQ for engaging a very broad spectrum of stakeholders in developing their legislative proposals, including local governments, solid waste disposal and recycling companies, business and industrial interests, environmental groups and the public. DEQ significantly modified early proposals in light of these stakeholders’ comments.

DEQ presented their legislative proposal to Metro’s Solid Waste Alternative Advisory Committee (SWAAC) last fall. There was general agreement among the SWAAC members that this proposal is a step in the right direction and that the recovery goals are achievable with strong collaboration and innovation.

We urge you to pass SB 263 and SB 245.