

Chair Vega Pederson and members of the committee I represent the almost 500 members of the Oregon School Nutrition Association. We are Oregon's school nutrition professionals and those whose operations this law would affect.

Although at first glance House bill 2762 may seem noble, there are several potential issues with eliminating the use of polystyrene materials from school foodservice operations. The alternatives are either using paper or typically "compostable" disposables or implementing ware-washing--both of which can be a major expense to a school district.

Many schools are unable to afford the installation of dishwashers, or don't have the space. The price of a dishwasher starts at approximately \$10-20,000. This does not include maintenance, water and the chemical based detergent and rinse aides used to wash the dishes. A school district will also have to hire someone to wash the dishes at minimum this will cost a school \$15.00 per hour including benefits.

Reusable washable plates, as opposed to the cafeteria trays used at secondary schools especially, tend to need to be replaced at a very high rate. The cost of a school lunch tray is about \$.75 cents to \$1.00 per tray. Secondary meals tend to be "mobile" and go away from the cafeteria resulting in them being lost or getting thrown away. Cafeteria trays are not a one-time cost.

"Compostable" plates and trays are much more expensive than the .03 foam tray. Compostable trays cost school nutrition programs .29 cents each and only compost when treated in a commercial composting facility. It has been estimated that they remain intact as long as polystyrene materials when placed in a landfill.

School nutrition programs receive a reimbursement of 2.98 per lunch served and only 1.62 for each breakfast. With this reimbursement we have to pay employee's wages and benefits, Pots and pans, disposables, utilities, uniforms, and of course food costs. We do not want to have to spend this money on more expensive trays or dishwashers when we can spend it on serving our children healthy meals.

There have been many, many new food requirements put upon us with the healthy hunger free kids act of 2010. Including requiring students to take more fruits and vegetables, if they want them or not and serving more expensive products such as whole grain breads, rice, tortillas and pastas and specially formulated low sodium foods.

These required changes and new requirements for employee benefits and insurance have already put many school nutrition programs, which are required to break even, into debt and have forced them to use funds transferred from their district's general fund to operate. In a recent survey, only 18% of the countries schools estimated that they would break even this year.

Although we commend you for the good intentions of this bill we hope that you see what a hardship it would be on our programs.

Sincerely,

Lynne Shore  
Legislative Chair  
Oregon School Nutrition Association