

**Testimony of Jim Quinn and Scott Klag  
On House Bill 3251  
House Committee on Energy and the Environment  
May 14, 2015**



Chair Vega Pederson and Members of the Committee:

Metro is the regional government of the Portland metropolitan area, with major responsibilities in 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 amount and toxicity of the solid waste stream.

Metro developed the -1 amendment to HB 3251 to facilitate a stakeholder dialogue on establishing a statewide product stewardship program for household hazardous waste. We want to speak today to the need for such a program and to identify some key elements a stewardship program should address.

Household hazardous waste (HHW) is a term applied to those products many of us have sitting in our garages, basements or other storage areas in need of special handling and disposal. Examples of HHW include: flammable products including solvents; home and garden products containing herbicides or pesticides; and highly corrosive or reactive products like oven cleaners and pool chemicals. If these products are not properly managed, they pose risks to children from poisonings, to solid waste workers on collection routes and at disposal facilities from chemical reactions or releases, and to the environment from spills or through other pathways.

Metro conducted its first special collection event for HHW in 1986. In the nearly thirty years since that event, we have developed a program that includes two permanent facilities and serves more than 55,000 customers a year. However, we believe there is still a lot of HHW not being properly managed.

Under product stewardship, the makers of products share in taking responsibility for their products' leftovers. Product stewardship programs in Oregon for electronic waste and paint have been beneficial. However, we recognize that "one size does not fit all." A stewardship program for HHW will need to reflect the different issues arising from the nature of the products and the industries that manufacture them.

We believe the -1 amendment to HB 3251 is a good place to start a discussion about what an Oregon stewardship program for household hazardous waste might look like. The bill addresses key elements including: identifying what products would be covered; financing the program through cost internalization; setting program convenience and performance requirements; building on the HHW infrastructure local governments and the state have invested in; and promoting the availability and use of less toxic and hazardous household products.

Metro will be working with stakeholders to initiate a dialogue that can make this HHW proposal successful and be of benefit to the whole state of Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to present today.