

May 15, 2015

Support for House Bill 2762- eliminate use of polystyrene trays

Chair Roblan, members of the Senate Committee on Education,

Thank you for allowing us to show our support of House Bill 2762. We are here representing Bandon High School's Surfrider Service and Marine Ecology club, which have made steps toward replacing Styrofoam trays in our school's cafeteria. There are a multitude of reasons that this program is beneficial to the world around us. Living on the coast this directly affects us, and we see the everyday challenges that Styrofoam poses in our environment.

Not many people know that when you heat Styrofoam, toxins are released and absorbed into the food. People who eat hot meals from these trays are ingesting harmful chemicals. Humans aren't the only ones to experience the negative effects of Styrofoam. Because the foam breaks down but does not biodegrade, fish and wildlife easily mistake it for food. This causes digestion and malnutrition problems for the creatures consuming the plastic products.

Our small school alone goes through hundreds of these trays each week. It's not uncommon to see the gulls and other birds sifting through the piles of polystyrene-filled garbage cans. Locals also regularly find bits of foam garbage washed up on our beaches. No matter how many beach clean-ups we host, there seems to be little change in the amount of plastic waste washed ashore.

BHS students founded our Surfrider Service and Marine Ecology Club this school year and chose to focus on reducing plastic waste within our school, given the effects we commonly encounter on our beaches, ocean and nearshore environment. Within a few months, the members of the club had already integrated cardboard trays into our school lunch system with a program we called "[Make Loam Not Foam](#)". Members of the club have provided students with an alternative to the harmful foam trays. Along with supplying new trays, we have also implemented informational posters, explaining the repercussions of polystyrene on our environment.

The youth of Oregon's coastal communities urge you to pass this bill, as cardboard trays will benefit both human and environmental health. These trays serve the same purpose as Styrofoam, but can be mass produced, along with being recycled, without having to worry about the environmental impact. Thank you again for providing us with this opportunity to speak about this significant issue.

Sincerely,

Paige Smith  
Billie Ray Ward  
Morgan Vineyard  
Rowan Reimer  
Eleanor Winston  
Katlynn Ferrer