

Seventy-Eighth Oregon Legislative Assembly - 2015 Regular Session
STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY
Senate Committee On Education

MEASURE: HB 2762 A
CARRIER: Sen. Rosenbaum

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 05/26/15

Action: Do Pass The A-Eng Bill.

Meeting Dates: 05/19, 05/26

Vote:

Yeas: 6 - Baertschiger Jr, Beyer, Hass, Knopp, Kruse, Roblan

Exc: 1 - Gelser

Prepared By: Gretchen Engbring, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires school district by July 1, 2021 eliminate use of polystyrene foam plates, trays, food containers or food packaging in service of breakfast or lunch at school site unless school district participates in recycling program for polystyrene foam. Requires districts that use polystyrene in service of meals during 2014-2015 school year to establish plan to eliminate use of polystyrene or participate in recycling program for polystyrene by 2021. Requires Oregon Department of Education (ODE) provide extension for compliance to school district able to show financial hardship experienced from complying with prohibition on use of polystyrene. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2015.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Health threats posed by eating or drinking hot or acidic foods from polystyrene containers
- Polystyrene as a non-biodegradable material that contributes to litter, landfills, and marine debris
- Impacts of polystyrene on wildlife, who may eat the material and get sick or starve
- Lack of alternatives for students who are eating school meals served on polystyrene trays or other packaging
- Potential alternatives that are biodegradable, recyclable, and healthier, such as cardboard
- Cost differential between polystyrene and other options
- Decreasing costs of alternatives as use increases

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Polystyrene is a thermoplastic material made from petroleum-derived styrene. Polystyrene can be made into both foam and rigid products. It is one of the most common types of plastic and is used to produce disposable plastic cutlery and dinnerware, as well as products used to keep hot and cold foods at desired temperatures.

House Bill 2762-A prohibits a school district from providing meals using polystyrene foam plates, trays, containers or packaging after July 1, 2021. The measure allows the use of such materials if the district participates in a foam recycling program and also directs ODE to allow an extension for districts able to show a financial hardship from compliance with the prohibition.