



January 28, 2019

Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Oregon Legislature

Re: Environment Oregon supports Senate Bill 90

Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee,

Environment Oregon is a statewide, citizen-based environmental advocacy organization working for clean air, clean water and open space. We support Senate Bill 90 because we believe that nothing we use for ten minutes should pollute the environment for hundreds of years.

Often, we don't think twice about getting a plastic straw, and when we're done with it, we throw it away. Only, there is no "away." Many single-use plastics, including plastic straws, aren't recyclable, so they either end up in the landfill or in our natural environment and persist there for hundreds of years.

Plastics don't biodegrade like paper, food or other organic materials. Rather, they'll remain intact or break down into smaller pieces called microplastics, that are easily ingested by wildlife. Plastic fragments have been found ingested by literally hundreds of different species, including 86% of all sea turtle species, and nearly half of all seabird and marine mammal species.

While straws may seem insignificant, they are a big contributor to this problem, as they are some of the most pervasive single-use plastics that we all interact with on a daily basis.

Senate Bill 90 takes a measured approach to tackling this problem by simply requiring that restaurants not automatically give customers a plastic straw, but instead only provide it if the customer requests it. This has the dual impact of reducing plastic waste, while also encouraging a change in consumer behavior. Environment Oregon fully supports this bill and encourages its swift passage.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,

Celeste Meiffren-Swango
State Director, Environment Oregon