

**Testimony of Randy Tucker, Legislative Affairs Manager
In Support of Senate Bill 90
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
January 29, 2019**



Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee:

Metro is the regional government of the Portland metropolitan area that serves a population of over 1.5 million. Metro has major responsibilities for managing the region's solid waste and providing opportunities for recycling and waste reduction. Our services include the Oregon Zoo, whose mission is to inspire the community to respect animals and take action on behalf of the natural world.

The Oregon Zoo recognizes that the rapid rise of plastic production has created a global plastic waste crisis. Plastic pollution is a growing threat to the health of marine and land-based wildlife, ecosystems and humans. A reduction in plastic production will only be achievable through the combined efforts of consumers, businesses and governments. SB 90 is a good step in that direction.

Oregon Zoo director Don Moore offers this perspective:

Straws are among the top ten most common items of litter found during beach clean ups. They harm both marine and terrestrial animals. In fact, plastic microtrash is one of the greatest threats to California condors, a native species the Oregon Zoo and our partners are working to restore from near extinction and return to the skies of Oregon.

The Oregon Zoo chose to discontinue use of plastic straws as an initial step in our efforts to eliminate single use plastics across our campus and in all of our operations. Eliminating plastic straws is a simple first step that anyone serving beverages can take that will make a big difference for wildlife.

SB 90 also aligns with Metro's solid waste and recycling goals and perspective on single-use plastics and disposable food service items:

- Single use plastic items, including straws, are not recyclable. They can't be economically gathered in sufficient volumes nor separated out at recovery facilities to justify a collection program.
- Our objective is to get consumers and businesses to switch to reusable and durable serviceware. Our focus is not just on recycling, but on *reuse and source reduction* – reducing waste at the source.
- “Compostable” single-use serviceware, including straws, is not a viable solution. Such products can be a major source of contamination at compost facilities. Additionally, “compostable” or “biodegradable” plastics do not break down in a marine environment.

Metro and the Oregon Zoo believe that by focusing on reducing the sources of plastic pollution, SB 90 will both advance our regional waste reduction goals and protect the health of wildlife, people and the ecosystems we depend on. We urge you to move it forward.