

February 18, 2018

Chair Helm and Members of the Environment and Energy Committee;

As a private citizen and a member of a local group interested in banning single-use plastic bags, I would like to share my story. In 1966, I moved to Oregon to join my family and attend college at the U of Oregon. What ensued were years of observing this incredible state's leadership in dealing with the environment. Governor Tom McCall was instrumental. Our beaches became public; the first bottle Bill was passed affecting the litter caused by bottles and cans. We came to be known as a State which stood out for its concern for the environment. My younger brothers and sister shared recycling measures they learned in school. That was over forty years ago!

Skip to more recently. I have five grandchildren, whom I have been fortunate to take on Road Scholar Trips which combine education with travel. In two of the five cities visited, we attended Rehabilitative Turtle Hospitals. Observing the injured and mangled turtles was heart-breaking. Back home here in Newberg, I was sitting in my car in a grocery store parking lot, observing cart after cart full of plastic bags being lead to cars. Then I watched an important movie on Netflix, called "The Plastic Ocean" in which I learned about a few island countries where the majority of the population is dying young due to cancers caused by plastic infestation. The amount of plastic going into our oceans and waterways is just astounding.

We started a group here in Newberg with hopes of banning single-use plastic bags. When we started our group, there were five cities with ordinances such as what we hope to take to our city council. (Although we would prefer a state-wide ban to make us redundant and unnecessary.) Now there are 16 ordinances passed in less than one year. Today, and every day, I am learning about movement forward on this issue. Today, for example, Trader Joe's came out with a comprehensive statement that the store will be banishing plastic, including with produce. Yesterday I learned about a new recycling center in Utah where Boise sends its plastic to be turned into fuel. All these moves are encouraging! Now is the time to act!

My hope as a Newberg citizen and member of a group, is that HB2509 will go forward! The state of Oregon is an outstanding place to live and work. Whenever I travel, I cannot tell you how often people tell me they want to move here. This is due to the beautiful environment and a policy of caring about our fantastic, lush state. I encourage you to support this vital bill.

Thank you for your commitment and work.

Cathy Holbrook  
Bag It Better Newberg!  
Newberg, OR