

House Committee on Energy and Environment
Oregon State House of Representatives
Salem, OR

Chair Helm, Vice Chairs Reschke and Schouten,

At this point several municipalities around Oregon have banned single use plastic shopping bags because of the impact that they have on our environment. Indeed, we've known for decades the effect overuse of plastic packaging can have on wildlife and the places they inhabit. Failure to act is no longer an option.

I would also add that this is a matter of environmental equity. Like most issues that affect the natural world; the impacts are inordinately felt by those who have and consume less than the communities that externalize the largest share of waste, litter and pollutants. Ecosystems are delicate interdependent and impacted by human actions in ways we're just now starting to fully understand. So, while we can point to the immediate concerns for the growing island of trash in the oceans and the increasing presence of plastics in the flesh of the fish that sustain us; there are no doubt impacts that will only be revealed in the decades to come.

While many will say that a state as small Oregon will have limited impact on this worldwide concern; we must also consider our place in this country, and the world, as leaders with a responsibility to set an example. Our behaviors and actions are often taken up in communities much larger than our own and with the millions of people in our state we can create a large enough market for businesses that can innovate in the space created by forward thinking environmental policy. With this simple change in behavior we can start to see the larger picture of our possible influence on changing international perspectives on positive environmental policy.

Such wide-ranging effects from something that could be so, relative to the impact, easy to address moved me and many of my fellow electeds in East County to act. Clearly though, while our actions, could and will result in positive change, a larger statewide effort would greatly eclipse what each of us could do on our own and make the effort scalable and economically viable for businesses and consumers. I urge you all to support and pass HB 2509.

Best Regards,

Eduardo Morales
Gresham City Councilor