



Oregon  
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**Testimony to the House Committee on Energy and the Environment  
on House Bill 2883**

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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Oregon Environmental Council supports HB 2883 to prohibit food vendors from using polystyrene containers in selling, serving or dispensing prepared food.

Single-use plastics create a myriad of costly problems including litter, waste, pollution, high energy use and fossil fuel consumption. In Oregon, we have the ingenuity, expertise and will for stewardship that it takes to address these problems. It makes practical sense to begin where the problems are greatest and the solutions are ready.

Polystyrene in prepared food applications is just such a place to start.

In addition to the challenges posed by disposal, it is worth noting the health hazard posed by polystyrene in food contact uses. Studies show that low levels of styrene can migrate from polystyrene into food, especially when in contact with high-fat food<sup>1</sup> and heat. Chronic long-term exposure to styrene is linked to effects on the nervous system and kidneys as well as to cancer. Though exposure to styrene from food containers alone may be relatively low for a healthy adult, it is one of the many hazards that people encounter every day—and it is entirely avoidable.

In Oregon alone, where our food culture is as celebrated as our environment, we have examples of both voluntary and regulatory food container solutions that meet the requirements for affordability, practicality and food safety with a smaller footprint for energy, waste and litter.

A regulatory policy ending the use of polystyrene in applications where it can make the greatest difference for health and our environment is a common-sense way to support the move to higher-performing alternatives.

Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/fee7/febac2da2215f319147c2b600251f2fa7cec.pdf>