



April 22, 2019

Senator Paul Holvey, Chair
House Committee on Rules
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Re: HB 2509 Support

Dear Chairman Holvey and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Humane Society of the United States and our Oregon members and constituents, I submit the following written testimony in support of HB 2509, legislation that would prohibit retail establishments from providing single-use check out bags to consumers.

Single use plastics are detrimental to the environment and lead to ingestion, entanglement, and death of birds, marine mammals, sea turtles, and other wildlife. Plastics that wash into our oceans break down into microplastics and are pervasive throughout our ocean ecosystem. Animals feed plastics to their young, unknowingly starving them.

Items that are used once and thrown in the landfill can take years (sometimes hundreds of years) to decompose. Our consumption of single use plastics such as plastic bags, plastic drink stirrers, and styrofoam is set to increase exponentially over the coming years. This is truly a global problem of the widest scale.

You may have seen the recent story of the Cuvier's beaked whale in the Philippines who died after ingesting 88 pounds of plastic, including multiple shopping bags. The plastic in his stomach made him feel full, and he starved to death. Last year, a pilot whale died in Thailand after consuming 80 plastic bags. Something must be done; we cannot continue to contribute to the suffering of these creatures.

Statistics:

- 1 garbage truck of plastic is dumped into the ocean every minute (source: [World Economic Forum](#))
- Scientists estimate that 90% of all seabirds alive today have ingested plastic during their life and marine litter harms over 600 species (source: [CSIRO](#))
- A [report](#) from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation in partnership with the World Economic Forum predicts that by 2050 plastic in the ocean could weigh more than fish
- Plastics pollution has a direct and deadly effect on wildlife. An unknown number of seabirds and sea turtles, seals and other marine mammals are killed each year after ingesting plastic or getting entangled in it. Endangered wildlife like [Hawaiian monk](#)

[seals](#) and [Pacific loggerhead sea turtles](#) are among the many species that eat and get caught in plastic litter (source: [Center for Biological Diversity](#))

- Straws and drink stirrers alone accounted for 2.6% of the trash picked up on beaches this year (source: [LA Times](#))

There is incredible momentum on this issue and as a coastal state, Oregon would prove itself to be a leader in this space if this bill becomes law. The pain and suffering plastic materials inflict on animals is immense and we simply cannot ignore it any more. The Humane Society of the United States supports a ban on the products outlined in the language of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important legislation.

Respectfully,

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