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RE: HB 2883, Prohibiting the use of polystyrene for food containers

Dear Chair Dembrow and Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

Unfortunately I am unable to attend the public hearing for HB 2883, but I would like to submit the following testimony in support of the bill.

- Polystyrene and other plastic foams are some of the most dangerous forms of plastic waste for our environment.
- This type of plastic breaks apart very easily into small pieces, but does not break down completely for milenia.
- This creates a huge pollution problem for our fish, wildlife and ecosystems.
- There is evidence that polystyrene has negative health impacts on humans as well as other animals. It is thought to be a carcinogen, and has been found in the tissues of every person tested by the EPA.
- Like plastic bags, polystyrene is difficult to recycle, especially once its been used for food storage. Only 0.2% of polystyrene foam used in the US ends up being recycled, according to Oregon Wild. According to the EPA, Americans produce 3 million tons of polystyrene a year, including about 25 billion cups.
- Many localities have already taken the step of banning polystyrene use for food containers, including Ashland, Milwaukie, Medford, Florence, and Portland.

- In 2015 the state legislature directed Oregon Schools from using polystyrene in any of their food services (HB 2762). It is time we extended this protection to the entire state.
- There are also economic benefits to transitioning away from polystyrene and other plastics. Oregon is not a producer of petroleum products, but we are a producer of paper products. Banning plastic foam food containers could create more market opportunities for Oregon companies over out of state businesses.
- As a 5th generation Oregonian, who grew up enjoying the great natural wonders of our state, I am very invested in ensuring that future generations have access to the same clean water and environment that I did.
- This is an urgent problem, requiring decisive action. The longer we wait the more plastic will find its way into our rivers and oceans, into our food and our drinking water, and as we know once it's there it will stick around for thousands of years.
- We need to take the leadership to ensure better futures for our children and grandchildren. Futures that include clean water, uncontaminated by tiny plastic particles or giant plastic trash islands.
- This ban of single use polystyrene is a step towards that future.