

## **Vote YES on H.B. 2509**

### **Protect Oregon's environment and ban the single use plastic bag!**

**There is no question** plastic is accumulating in our land, rivers, and ocean. Every day we see more evidence of the damage plastic is doing to our environment. Plastic bags, in particular, are not biodegradable; they last virtually forever (500+ years or more). Instead, plastic bags break down into smaller pieces called micro-plastics that leach toxins that pollute our land and water systems, contaminating wildlife, including marine life, as well as ecosystems. Many animals confuse plastics for food or nest building materials, while others get entangled and trapped in the plastic mess. Recent studies estimate tens of thousands of marine animals are killed by plastic bags annually. There are further concerns about how humans will be affected by drinking contaminated water, or eating fish such as crab, that has been consuming micro-plastics.

SOLVE, an organization, which has removed millions of pounds of trash from Oregon's beaches reports plastic bags are among the most common plastic litter.

<https://www.solveoregon.org/litter-and-marine-debris> Among the most common plastic bags found littering and found in our ocean, beaches, estuarine, and rivers are from fast food places as well as grocery stores.

Because they are light in weight, plastic bags easily blow out of trash cans and landfills. They clog waterways, damage farm land, and provide an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes. Also, plastic bags are manufactured using petroleum, a nonrenewable resource.

It has been estimated that the average American family takes home 1,500 plastic bags per year, for a total of over 100 billion bags used in the U.S. every year. Almost all of these plastic bags end up in the trash. Local governments are stuck with the costs of disposal and clean up. Those disposal and cleanup efforts have, as you can see, not made a dent in keeping plastic bags out of the environment.

Several Oregon cities including Manzanita, Wheeler, Bay City, Ashland, Bend, Portland, Salem, and McMinnville have banned single use plastic bags. There is simply no point to these bags; it is a step we can take toward limiting the plastic in our environment. Oregon's jobs and quality of life depend on a healthy ocean, a clean river, and plastic free lands.

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality supports bans on single use plastic bags and a fee on recycled paper bags. <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/mm/production/Pages/Bags.aspx>

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