

May 28, 2019

Senator Ginny Burdick
Senate Committee on Rules

RE: Please Support HB 2509

I am writing in support of HB 2509, to encourage the use of reusable bags and to eliminate single-use plastic checkout bags in Oregon. I worked on the campaign to ban single-use plastic bags here in Corvallis. That was eight years ago, and now it's accepted and common to see people bringing their reusable bags to the grocery store.

I also want to underscore the importance of a fee on paper bags. There are many reasons why a fee is integral to the bill. Thirteen of the 16 cities in Oregon that passed plastic bag laws have a fee on paper. They understand that without a fee, people revert to single-use paper bags, which defeats the purpose of the legislation. Without a fee on paper, a single-use item is replaced with another. Resulting in an increase in paper bag use outweighing reusable bag use. And the fee is not just to reduce single-use plastic, but to reduce our "single-use" mindset. This is important because nature's resources are limited and becoming more so. As plastic continues to harm our oceans, and the climate emergency inevitably puts more pressure on resources, we will eventually drop our single-use habits out of necessity. But we can start now through passing HB 2509.

It has been said that family-wage jobs will be lost, and the pulp and paper industry will lose jobs by passing this policy. However, this is short-term thinking. Cutting down forests that serve many important ecological functions, to make paper bags to carry our groceries home, so we're not inconvenienced by reusable bags, is simply wrong. And addressing climate change means getting our single-use habits under control. Passing HB 2509 is one small step in the right direction.

Therefore, I urge your strong support of HB 2509 and retaining the paper bag fee.

Respectfully,

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