

May 29, 2019

Dear Committee Chair and Committee Members,

I moved to Oregon because the state has shown that it values oceans and forests, as I do. Our natural beauty is one of our most valuable resources, and we need to do what we can to protect it. Banning single-use plastic bags in retail settings, HB 2509 is one simple yet effective way to protect our environment.

Grocery store plastic bags have a twelve-minute lifespan from the time they leave the store to the time they're thrown away. These bags contribute to the 8 million metric tons of plastic entering the ocean every year. There and in landfills, they take anywhere from ten to 1,000 years to decompose, releasing toxins into the soil and water.

According to the non-profit Worldwatch Institute, tens of thousands of whales, birds, seals, and turtles die every year from contact with ocean-borne plastic bags. Another problem with plastic bags is that they're made from petroleum, and much fossil fuel energy is used to produce them.

Americans throw away 100 billion plastic grocery bags each year. Oregon needs to join California and Hawaii in banning plastic bags for retail use. A ten-cent charge for paper bags provides incentive for consumers to keep reusable bags at the ready when they go shopping. I urge you to pass HB 2509.

Sincerely,

Debra Ferency

Warrenton, Oregon