


2

**From the Desk of
Sen. Herman
Baertschiger, Jr.**

 FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY
NATIONAL LABOR
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Dear Members of the Oregon House of Representatives:

The Forest Products Industry National Labor Management Committee is a non-profit trust, formed to pursue the common public policy interests of the working men and women in the forest products industry. Collectively, the Committee represents more than two million workers across the nation, including lumber and sawmill workers, woodworkers, machinists, carpenters, and pulp and paper workers.

We, and the undersigned organizations, are writing today to express concerns about HB 2509. While the bill is a part of a well-intentioned effort to reduce plastic waste, we are concerned that the bill unnecessarily targets paper bags with a mandatory minimum 5 cent charge. The charge will increase costs for working families and discourage consumers from choosing paper bags that are easily recycled and do not create hazards for wildlife.

Paper bag manufacturing and recycling also supports family-wage, unionized jobs in the Pacific Northwest, including a facility in Beaverton. The bags are made of recycled paper and help sustain Oregon's working forests. The legislature should follow the example set by the city of Portland, which demonstrates that we can both achieve our goal of reducing plastic waste, while consumers can have the option to choose paper without paying a 5 cent charge.

It doesn't make any sense for the legislature to require consumers to pay for bags, a service that until now they have received at no cost, to benefit grocers. Consumers already pay for the bags in the price of their groceries. We've already seen how paper bag use drops when fees are added, in California a similar fee saw a 61% drop in paper bag use. That decline in Oregon would directly impact good union jobs at our paper bag manufacturer in Beaverton and would further hurt our already declining timber industry. The new requirement will also create challenges for store employees if consumers push back on paying a new fee. It will be workers who have to face customers as the ambassadors of this new policy.

We think that the legislature can move forward with this bill without giving a windfall to grocers at the expense of consumers and workers.

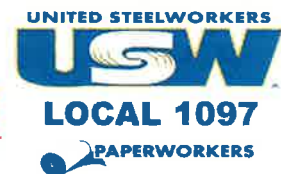
Respectfully,



Mike Draper
Chairman
Forest Products Industry National Labor-Management Committee

Additional Labor Unions Opposing The Paper Bag Fee On The Back

Labor Unions Opposing the Paper Bag Fee



Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers

Carpenters Industrial Council - UBC

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers/Woodworkers District W24 Lodge

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers/Local Lodge W261

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Union Local 48

Lumber & Sawmill Workers Local Union 2949

Lumber & Sawmill Workers Local Union 2784

Oregon AFL-CIO

Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters

Teamsters District Council 2

Teamsters Joint Council 37

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555

United Steelworkers Local 1097

United Steelworkers Local 1189